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HABITUATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND CONFLICT:
HEGEL AND TRANSFORMATIVE THEORIES OF RATIONALITY

by

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Under the Direction of Sebastian Rand, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

While the Hegelian struggle for recognition is often taken to be the systematic point at which rational humanity differentiates itself from mere animality, Hegel more thoroughly expounds on the relationship between rational and nonrational animals in his *Encyclopedia*: humans diverge from nonrational animals through a process of habituation. While one might assume that Hegel takes this power of habituation to be sufficient for rationality, this assumption is complicated by Hegel's attribution of habituation to non-human animals as well. Against readings of the *Encyclopedia* that separate human and non-human animal habituation, I argue that a coherent interpretation must treat habituation as the same power in human and non-human animal life. My interpretation demonstrates Hegel's proximity to Matthew Boyle's transformative conception of rationality, which portrays rationality as a unique realization of animality. Hegel takes the realization of rational animal life to be thoroughly habitual, contra the instinctual basis of nonrational animal life.

INDEX WORDS: Hegel, German Idealism, Naturalism, Philosophy of Mind

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations I use throughout are as follows:

- DA* Aristotle. 2016. *De Anima*. Translated by Christopher Shields. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- EL* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 2005. *Logic*. Translated by William Wallace. New York: Oxford University Press.
- PM* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 2007. *Philosophy of Mind*. Translated by A.V. Miller and W. Wallace. New York: Oxford University Press.
- PN* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 2004. *Philosophy of Nature*. Translated by A.V. Miller, New York: Oxford University Press.
- PR* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1991. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H.B. Nibset. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- PS* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hegel's works will be cited by abbreviation and section number (§). When applicable, they will be followed by an "A" or "Z" to denote the inclusion of a Remark or *Zusatz* section, respectively. For instance: "(PM §380/Z)" refers to body paragraph §380 of the *Philosophy of Mind* and its *Zusatz*. Additionally, Aristotle's *De Anima* is cited by abbreviation and line number. For instance, "(DA 433a 3-6)" refers to lines 443a 3 through 443a 6 of Aristotle's *De Anima*.

1 INTRODUCTION

Readers of Hegel often interpret the struggle for recognition of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the systematic point at which rational humanity differentiates itself from mere animality.¹ However, Hegel expounds on the relationship between rational and nonrational animals more thoroughly in his *Encyclopedia*, focusing on habituation as a necessary aspect of rational life. Secondary literature on the *Encyclopedia* often brings Hegel's discussion of habitual, second nature into dialogue with the second nature of McDowellian naturalism: while all animals are sentient, human sapience is unique insofar as, for us, concepts are already, naturally at work in rational, perceptual experience (McDowell 1996: 66-70).² In recent years, these debates have shifted focus from the relationship between conceptual and perceptual capacities to a focus on rational life, raising the question of how to best distinguish the rational, human form of life from its nonrational counterparts.³ The *Encyclopedia* provides resources for this question as well. Specifically, Hegel argues that humans diverge from nonrational animals by obtaining consciousness, and thus "self-knowing reason," through habituation (*PM* §387).⁴

Because Hegel connects habituation to rational life, one might assume that, on his view, possessing this power of habituation suffices for the development of rationality. However, this assumption is complicated by Hegel's claim in the *Philosophy of Nature* that habituation also plays a prominent role in nonrational animal life.⁵ One common strategy for ameliorating this tension involves making a distinction between the power of habituation in rational human life

¹ Robert Pippin, for instance, characterizes the struggle for recognition as important insofar as it cannot be resolved at the "animal level" at which desire governs actions (2011: 82). See Kojève (1993) and Brandom (2019) as well.

² See Forman (2010), Levine (2015), and Schuringa (2018).

³ See Boyle (2012; 2016) and Thompson (2008; 2015).

⁴ The *Encyclopedia* consists of three books. *EL* indicates the first book of the *Encyclopedia*, the *Logic* (Hegel 2005). *PN* indicates the second book, the *Philosophy of Nature* (Hegel 2004). *PM* indicates the third book, the *Philosophy of Mind* (Hegel 2007).

⁵ Following Hegel, "animal life" and "animality" refer specifically to non-human animals unless otherwise specified, e.g., "human animality" or "rational animality."

and its counterpart in merely animal life; in this case, human habituation allows for the development of consciousness and, through subsequent developments, human sociality, while mere animal habituation simply allows animals to form habits that do not result in developments beyond their mere, natural existence. While the *results of* habituation differ between rational and nonrational animals along these lines, Hegel makes no further claim that habituation *itself* is thus a different power for each. Accordingly, I will argue that, according to Hegel, habituation is the same, natural power in all animals, but also functions as the necessary basis of rational life, a basis exclusive to humans. Habituation is thus a precondition of the crucial struggle for recognition between self-conscious beings.

I proceed as follows. In Section 2, I consider whether habituation is regarded as the same power in rational and nonrational life in the *Encyclopedia*. Because Hegel attributes habituation to humans and non-human animals, noting the differences between these two attributions will be crucial to understanding the life typical of each type of animal. From this discussion, it will become evident that, despite Hegel's divergent discussions of habituation in rational and nonrational animal life, the same power of habituation is attributed to each. In Section 3, I consider two questions that my interpretation of Hegelian habituation must answer to be successful. In my response to these questions, I utilize Matthew Boyle's distinction between additive and transformative theories of rationality. Specifically, by understanding Hegelian rationality along the lines of Boyle's transformative conception of rationality, the tension between habituation's crucial role in rational life and Hegel's attribution of habituation to nonrational animals can be ameliorated: habituation is a power in both rational and nonrational animals, but only functions as the basis of rational life, contra instinct as the basis of nonrational life. In Section 4, I analyze Hegel's discussion of conflict in both rational and nonrational life.

With a transformative reading of Hegelian rationality in mind, the significance of human struggle becomes clear: while nonrational animals perpetually face contingent violence in nature, conflict between humans provides an important, yet impermanent stage in their development as rational animals. In Section 5, I respond to a possible objection that reading Hegel along Boyle's contemporary, transformative lines may ignore crucial, historical differences between their respective frameworks.

2 HABITUATION IN THE *ENCYCLOPEDIA*

Normal use of the word “habit” refers to routines we develop: I could be in the habit of saving my Word documents regularly, for instance. For Hegel, “habit” becomes a technical term, referring to an individual’s power to form habits: for simplicity, I will refer to the power itself as habituation and the specific routines formed as habits. Habituation allows individuals to adopt routines or responses to their environment that can be employed unreflectively; additionally, these habits can be formed reflectively or unreflectively. Because habituation allows an individual to unreflectively interact with her surroundings, it is said to render the individual “*free of*” these surroundings, as opposed to being “occupied with them” (*PM* §410). Accordingly, Hegel characterizes habituation as a liberatory power for the individual.

This preliminary description of habituation as a liberatory power might be taken to contradict other descriptions Hegel gives of habituation, specifically his description of habituation as a “mechanism,” which carries the connotation that an individual’s habits are acted on unfreely (*PM* §410/A). Some argue that habituation can be coherently understood as both liberatory and mechanistic, citing Hegel’s claims that the unfreedom involved in habituation is “partly just *formal*” and so does not necessarily entail unreflective repetition of behaviors (*PM* §410/A); these readers typically emphasize Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind*, paying special attention to the “Anthropology.”⁶ On this reading, habits can be formed freely, and while they are employed in a mechanistic way, this mechanism liberates the individual from a careful focus on the task that has become habitual. Others take Hegel’s description of habituation as mechanism to mean that habituation is an important step in human freedom, but does not yet grant the complete liberation seen later in human ethical life; these readers emphasize the discussion of

⁶ See Magrì (2016) and Novakovic (2017; 2019).

habituation in ethical life seen in the *Philosophy of Right*.⁷ Insofar as the “Anthropology” distinguishes human life from the lives of non-human animals, my analysis emphasizes the liberatory role of habituation as characterized in the “Anthropology.” While my focus on rational and nonrational life-forms justifies an emphasis on the liberatory aspects of habituation, I later consider Hegel’s discussion of the habits of ethical life, which demonstrate how habituation, even in its most mechanistic uses, can nonetheless be seen as a liberatory power.⁸

While this section begins by addressing habituation in the “Anthropology,” which features habituation’s prominent role in human life, it also requires turning to the *Philosophy of Nature*, which includes a brief but crucial discussion of habituation relevant to understanding Hegel’s distinction between human and non-human animals. Specifically, in “The Animal Organism,” Hegel claims that habituation plays an important part in merely animal life.⁹ Many readers of the *Encyclopedia*, looking primarily to the “Anthropology,” take the importance Hegel attributes to habituation in establishing rational life to suggest that the habituation of non-human animal life is a different power entirely than habituation of human life.¹⁰ However, by analyzing habituation in both the “Anthropology” and “The Animal Organism,” I will confirm that in these discussions, Hegel offers descriptions of the same power of habituation, albeit a power that entails different results for humans and non-human animals.

⁷ See McCumber (1990) and Menke (2013). The *Philosophy of Right* describes education as breaking “the resistance of the subject” to attain habitual, second nature (*PR* §151/A).

⁸ See Novakovic (2019) for a focused discussion on habituation as a liberatory capacity in human life.

⁹ “The Animal Organism” is the final section of the second book of the *Encyclopedia*, the *Philosophy of Nature*. In the third book, the *Philosophy of Mind*, the first section, “Subjective Mind,” begins with the “Anthropology.”

¹⁰ DeVries (1988), McCumber (1990), and Khurana (2013) distinguish between human and animal habituation in Hegel; Merker (2012) and Pinkard (2012) characterize habituation as unique to human life without any mention of animal habituation, so they could be understood as taking this position as well. Malabou (2005), Novakovic (2017), and Testa (2020) note the pronounced role of habituation in human life, but nonetheless take habituation to be the same power in humans and non-human animals.

2.1 Habituation in the “Anthropology”

The “Anthropology” describes the emergence of rational, human life through the stages of development of the soul; the soul articulates the organization of a living individual (*EL* §216). For Hegel, humans and non-human animals alike possess subjectivity in virtue of their respective souls, but only the former attain the final stage of “actual soul” through habituation (*PN* §351; *PM* §411).¹¹ In the “Anthropology,” the exigency of habituation for human life is demonstrated in habits of inurement and dexterity.¹² Habits of inurement are crucial to the development of the human soul in particular insofar as they can grant an individual “*liberation* from sensations” (*PM* §410/A).¹³ Habits of dexterity, on the other hand, allow individuals to perform trained behaviors without reflection.

Human beings require habits of inurement to mediate their experience of sensations. Sensations become an obstacle for the soul at its second stage, “feeling soul,” during which an individual’s soul becomes a subject “*for itself*” (*PM* §390). The individual takes sensations in as feelings and, in doing so, risks immersion “in the particularity of the feelings” (*PM* §403/A; *PM* §409). Consider renting an apartment next to the highway. Initially, the persistent noise might make it difficult to complete any task at home. At the level of soul, Hegel asserts that, were I occupied with these sensations indefinitely, their persistence would obstruct my ability to maintain an identity independent of feelings: if I am constantly taking in the sights and sounds of my environment, and I have no way of mitigating their claim on my attention, Hegel asserts that I would never properly be able to maintain a “self” in the first place. This risk of immersion necessitates the development of habituation, through which the soul “reduces the particularity of

¹¹ “The notion of life is the soul, and this notion has the body for its reality” (*EL* §216/Z). Hegel’s discussion of the soul tracks the development of a living subject’s embodiment.

¹² Forman (2010) and Levine (2015) detail this distinction between types of habits for Hegel.

¹³ Novakovic (2017) elaborates on the relationship between habituation and human freedom.

feelings (of consciousness too) to a determination in it that just *is*” (*PM* §410). Habituation allows an individual to harden against distractions, like the highway, that would otherwise consume her self-relation; without this habituation, an individual’s identity would be inseparable from the feelings that would otherwise consume her existence. Importantly, inurement to a sensation is not identical to a thorough disconnection from the sensation: Hegel describes the sensations that the soul habitually inures itself to as “possessions” of the soul, such that the individual can return to them, but is crucially “open to other activity and occupations” (*PM* §410). This inurement allows thoroughly habituated individuals to attain the actual soul, in which the individual achieves independent identity described as the self-relation of “*I ... which is thus thinking and subject for itself,*” or consciousness (*PM* §412).

In addition to habitual inurement, Hegel claims that habituation can be expressed in “world-directed” activity, as is the case in habits of dexterity.¹⁴ For instance, in mastering piano, a pianist’s body is “rendered pervious, made into an instrument,” such that she does not have to reflect on her posture, the force exerted by her fingers, or knowledge of music theory to perform practiced material (*PM* §410/A). The activity becomes immediate through habituation, as the relationship between the activity and the body does not have to be mediated by the individual’s reflection; in the case of the pianist, the performance does not require dwelling on the mechanics of her playing. By making activities immediate, habituation makes possible a “second nature” for the body’s inborn capacities: according to Hegel, such habitual activities have the immediacy of natural occurrences, but this immediacy “is an immediacy *posited* by the soul,” in contrast to

¹⁴ Another form of habitual, bodily inurement is “indifference toward satisfactions,” in which habituation to the satisfaction of desires dulls the influence of these forces over an individual’s activity (*PM* §410/A). Here, we can think of cravings for certain foods: after consuming enough chocolate, desire for it wanes. Alongside dexterity, the habits of ethical life are also “world-directed”: see Section 4 for discussion of this type of habit.

natural, built-in behavior (*PM* §410/A). While habits of inurement mediate an individual's relationship with the external world, habits of dexterity can make mediated activity immediate, granting the individual ease in familiar actions.

Hegel holds that the power of habituation is crucial for the differentiation of humans from non-human animals insofar as the former continually shape their responses to and interactions with the environment through habituation. The souls of non-human animals do not reach the stage of actual soul; for this reason, they do not attain consciousness and are "sunk in the individuality and limitation of sensation" (*PM* §412/Z).¹⁵ The importance of the difference between the actual, human soul and the limited, animal soul is evident in Hegel's discussion of sight. While sight is a sensation Hegel attributes to animal life, he describes human sight as a habitual unity of sensation and several further "determinations": "*seeing*," as a human activity, is "the concrete habit which *immediately* unites in one simple act the many determinations of sensation, consciousness, intuition, intellect, etc." (*PM* §410/A). Human sight is not a mere sensation, but a habit that, by providing an immediate unity to the seeing individual, demonstrates the world-directed structure of a habit of dexterity. The determinations united in human sight are all aspects of rational, perceptual experience.¹⁶ For instance, my consciousness of an object entails "the simple, unmediated certainty" of an object as an object distinct from myself (*PM* §418).¹⁷ Imagine seeing the LED screen on a microwave oven displaying "0:15."

¹⁵ While Hegel does not explicitly mark any stage of ensoulment as equivalent to the animal soul in the "Anthropology," we might take Hegel to hold that the animal soul is comparable to feeling soul, since developments like "self-feeling," are ascribed both to feeling soul and to animals in *The Animal Organism* (*PN* §357; *PM* §407). See Rand (2010) for discussion of the subjectivity Hegel ascribes to non-human animals.

¹⁶ See Houlgate (2016) for discussion of the role of each determination in mature, human sight.

¹⁷ By contrast, Hegel takes nonrational animals to sense their environment in such a way that they do not thoroughly distinguish themselves and their ends from other objects: the animal instinctually "impresses its specific nature (*Bestimmung*) on the details of its outer world": water, for instance, is instinctually related to the animal's thirst, and its "specific qualities" as a distinct entity are assimilated and destroyed in this sensory uptake (*PN* §362). Pinkard describes animal awareness of the world as "a unity of the subjective and the objective," from which the objective cannot be properly distinguished (2012: 28).

Some determinations at play include your sight of the microwave (sensation), this object's existence as separate from yourself (consciousness), and knowledge of what its timer indicates (intellect). Habituation unites these determinations to create one meaningful, perceptual experience, such that proper human sight is qualitatively different from the general sensation of sight in animal life.

Hegel claims that habituation “embraces all kinds and stages of mind’s activity” (*PM* §410/A); because habituation enables consciousness in human beings and liberates them from sensations, it plays a central role in the establishment of rational life. However, it is difficult to characterize this centrality, as Hegel attributes habituation to non-human animal life as well. Because Hegel highlights the role of habituation in achieving rationality, some readers of the *Encyclopedia* hold that habituation is either a different power in non-human animals or suggest that it does not play a role in animal life at all.¹⁸ John McCumber, for instance, argues that habituation, in its importance for human mindedness, is indicative of Spirit and thus cannot be endured by other animals: habituation does not play a substantive role in non-human animal life because the organization granted by habituation is fatal for nonrational animals (1990: 161). McCumber takes this to follow from the fact that Hegel invokes animal habituation only when describing natural, animal death, in which the individual is said to die as the result of a habit (*PN* §375); because animals are merely natural beings, habituation is not a power that can liberate animals from sensations.

Against readings that separate animal habituation from human habituation, I argue that a coherent reading of habituation in the *Encyclopedia* must treat habituation as the same power for rational and nonrational animals. I advance the following interpretation: habituation is the same,

¹⁸ See DeVries (1998: 102) and McCumber (1990: 160) for the former view; see Pinkard (2012: 29) and Merker (2012: 171) for the latter.

essentially nonrational, power in the lives of humans and non-human animals. Accordingly, isolated instances of habituation in animal life are not necessarily fatal and operate in a manner comparable to that of human life. However, habituation is necessary for the emergence of *rational* life and the states of affairs proper to it. While Hegel holds that habituation becomes necessary for nonrational animal life in natural death, this is only one possible form of death; in principle, a nonrational animal can go its entire life without forming many habits, and the habits it does form will ultimately be in the service of its instinct. In rational life, thorough habituation enables the development of consciousness that is necessary for rational human activity in general; further, this thorough habituation detailed in the “Anthropology” is proper only in rational life (*PM* §412).

2.2 Habituation in “The Animal Organism”

In “The Animal Organism,” Hegel provides a picture of animal life in general. To understand habituation’s role in merely animal life, we must look to Hegel’s sole mention of animal habituation: his discussion of death. Hegel holds that, in general, death begins with a disparity between the animal as an individual in nature and the universality of its genus: as a singular being, the individual cannot instantiate all aspects of its genus, though the genus nonetheless constitutes the form of its life. Additionally, the animal feels this disparity as a defect (*PN* §368). The individual then attempts to remove the disparity, achieving limited, abstract success. Further, this attempt to negate the disparity culminates in the individual’s “destruction” (*PN* §369/Z).

For animals that avoid all other causes of death, such as violence and disease, there remains natural death.¹⁹ In natural death, the individual negates its “singular, ... *finite* existence” to “[give] its singularity the form of universality”; this negation, referred to as “the inertia of *habit*,” ends the individual’s life process (*PN* §375). The animal individual, feeling the tension between its singularity and its genus, attempts to actualize the universality of its genus in its singular body through habituation. In doing so, the animal “dies from the habit of life, in that it lives itself into its body, into its reality” (*PN* §375/Z). In other words, the animal becomes habituated to its own existence, inured to the particularities that comprise its singular reality, including those that drive specific vital processes through which it maintains its body. Because the animal’s activity becomes “deadened and ossified,” the animal achieves an “abstract and immediate” universality through this habit of living (*PN* §375).

The attempt to achieve universality in natural death achieves only abstract, partial success because the attempt is grounded in the animal’s natural externality: its body. Because the habit of living grants the animal universality through bodily alteration, it is dependent on the animal’s bodily externality. By contrast, Hegel asserts that a complete success, concrete universality, must be achieved by a “sublation of externality,” in which the individual achieves universality not by altering, but by negating, yet preserving its bodiliness; for instance, the human mind “distinguishes itself from nature” through thought (*PM* §381/Z).²⁰ This concrete universality is not a possibility for the nonrational animal. For instance, since the habit of living is expressed through the animal’s natural body, the animal’s individuality is not distinguished from its naturalness: the universality represented by the animal’s body cannot be concrete universality

¹⁹ Hegel also includes sexual death here, which is experienced by “lower animal organisms” after reproducing (*PN* §369/Z).

²⁰ For further discussion of the difference between concrete and abstract universals, see Stern (2007).

insofar as the body representing it is merely natural. Though the animal individual attains the “identity of the universal” in this habit, representing its genus through its embodiment, it ceases to partake in the particular vital processes of its genus and thus can only represent its universality abstractly through death (*PN* §376).

Hegel’s name for the habituation involved in natural death is the habit of living. This specific habit appears also in the “Anthropology”: before exalting habituation as an “essential feature” of the mind, Hegel adds that “it is the habit of living which brings on death, or, albeit in a wholly abstract way, is death itself” (*PM* §410/A). Crucially, Hegel also connects the fatal habit of living to rational life in “The Animal Organism,” in that his foremost example of this habit utilizes humans: “old people dwell more and more within themselves and their kind, and their general ideas and conceptions tend to occupy their interest to the exclusion of what is particular” (*PN* §375/Z).²¹ Hegel takes the habituation that results in death to be inseparable from the general habituation that makes rational life possible.

Given that the habit of living is shared by rational and nonrational animals, McCumber’s claim that habituated organization is only fatal for nonrational animals cannot be correct. Further, this habit of living cannot be separated from the general habituation displayed in human life. In the “Anthropology,” Hegel claims that the abstract universality obtained in the habit of living is shared by all habits, as the soul “makes itself into abstract universal being” in habituation (*PM* §410). Generally, the abstract universality of habituation follows from the individual’s liberation from particularities: in habits of hardening, for instance, particular sensations are still sensed, but they are “reduced to an externality and immediacy; the soul’s *universal* being maintains its *abstract* being-for-self in it, and ... other purposes and activity, are

²¹ Hegel also describes the habit of living in the *Philosophy of Right*, in which a human’s complete habituation to life entails a “loss of interest” that amounts to “mental or physical death” (*PR* §151/A).

no longer involved in it” (*PM* §410/A). The habit of living seems to be an extreme example of hardening, as the individual becomes inured to *all* particularities.

Hegel’s treatment of the habit of living demonstrates that habituation is a natural power shared by all animals. The habit of living, for instance, seems to be the inevitable result of an animal repeating the same vital processes throughout life. One becomes habitually inured to particularities through repeated exposure and, for world-directed activities, “the production of habit appears as *practice*” (*PM* §410). Whether rational or nonrational, an animal that lives long enough will eventually sense, feel, and participate in repeated events, such that the particularities of these events will no longer be of concern. Understanding that habituation is a power shared by all animals, we must now determine why Hegel thinks this power yields different results for rational and nonrational life.

3 HABITUATION AS A REALIZATION OF ANIMALITY

Thus far, I have argued that Hegel's treatment of habituation in the lives of rational and nonrational animals suggests that habituation is the same power for each. However, to maintain coherence, my interpretation of the *Encyclopedia* must be able to answer two questions. The first regards the omission of habituation in merely animal life up until natural death: why does Hegel discuss animal habituation only in this one instance? In contrast to the emphasized role of habituation in human life, Hegel's discussion of non-human animal habituation is extremely selective. One might conclude from this contrast that human and non-human animal habituation cannot be the same power.

The second question regards the importance of habituation to rationality: if nonrational animals possess the power of habituation, how is habituation related to rationality? The "Anthropology" attributes the achievement of consciousness to habituation, and it is this consciousness that "*posits itself as reason*" and "has immediately awoken to becoming self-knowing-reason" (*PM* §387). For Hegel, consciousness and reason are necessarily connected: because consciousness is the result of the soul's sublation of natural bodiliness, it reveals the rational mindedness of the human soul.²² However, if non-human animals are capable of forming habits, but do not attain consciousness, then the power of habituation alone, while playing an important role in rational life, cannot be a sufficient condition for it. To answer these questions, I must first consider what Hegel's conception of rationality entails: explicating Hegelian rationality will result in a better understanding of how the power of habituation could be the

²² "Reason forms the substantial nature of mind" (*PM* §387/Z). The three sections of "Subjective Mind" each describe a dimension of rational mindedness: the task of the "Anthropology," for instance, is to demonstrate the abstract universality of the mind. Because attaining actual soul and, by extension, consciousness, is necessary for the developments of mind Hegel describes in the following sections, there is a direct link between the habituation of human life and rationality.

same power for rational and nonrational animals, yet play considerably different roles in the lives of each. To elucidate Hegel's picture of rational life, I will turn to Matthew Boyle's discussion of two common conceptions of rationality. Though Boyle locates these conceptions in contemporary philosophy of mind, he also considers their roots in historical traditions that Hegel addresses similarly.²³

3.1 Theories of Rationality

Boyle distinguishes between additive and transformative theories of rationality. Additive theories portray rationality as a single power in humans that provides "the capacity to *monitor* and *regulate*" animal powers like sight and desire (Boyle 2016: 2, 5).²⁴ Human beings are rational animals insofar as they possess animal powers and an *additional* power of rationality that regulates their animal powers. When cats, dogs, and human beings desire food, the same power of desire is operating in all three. Of course, human beings are unique in their eating, as there are conceptual dimensions to human experience: for instance, humans can be aware of their meal's nutritional content. The additive theorist holds that these concepts are added to human experience by rationality: like cats and dogs, human beings can desire something without the power of rationality playing a role in this process (2016: 22). Rationality, then, is a power unique to humans and external to the animal powers possessed by all three.

In contrast, transformative theorists affirm McDowell's assertion that rational animals are "animals whose natural being is permeated by rationality" (1996: 85). Boyle takes this assertion

²³ Boyle describes additive and transformative theories of rationality along Cartesian and Aristotelian lines, respectively (2016: 22). The connection between Aristotle and transformative theories of rationality is made rigorously in Boyle's "Essentially Rational Animals" (2012: 395). Notably, Hegel begins the *Philosophy of Mind* by expressing his desire to vindicate Aristotle's work on the soul (*PM* §378). I consider this connection between Hegel, Aristotle, and Boyle further in Section 5.

²⁴ See Velleman for an explicit example of an additive conception of rationality (2000: 11-2).

to mean that rationality is not a single power, but instead a different way in which animal powers are *realized*: animal powers are actualized in one way for nonrational animals and in another way for rational animals (2016: 5). This is not to say that the animal powers of humans begin as nonrational powers and are later literally transformed to be rational; instead, rationality transforms “what is to be an animal,” such that rationality denotes a different way of being an animal, rather than an additional trait (Boyle 2012: 410). For instance, human desire is qualitatively different from the desire of nonrational animals. When human beings feel disgust rather than desire at the prospect of eating dog food, this is not because a power of rationality regulates their desire, but rather because desire itself is “transformed” in humans: factors like social norms or awareness of the conditions in which dog food is made become a part of human desire itself. Crucially, these factors have their basis in rational concepts. Further, human beings can desire something primarily for a conceptual reason, such as a flavorless meal with unparalleled nutritional content. Because human animal powers are permeated by rationality, a human activity, like eating, is qualitatively different from a cat’s eating. The transformative conception of rationality thus specifies two distinct realizations of animal powers: a rational realization, witnessed in human beings, and a nonrational realization, witnessed in non-human animals.

Since the transformative theorist takes all animal powers to be qualitatively different in human beings, Boyle holds that the difference between rational and nonrational life-forms becomes unmistakably a “difference *in kind*” (2012: 395).²⁵ While an additive theorist might also

²⁵ Following Thompson, a life-form delimits “what states of affairs” would be proper for an organism (2015: 718). The life-form of a cat, for instance, entails being carnivorous, having four legs, and producing several offspring at a time. It is not the case that all members of a life-form must enter these states of affairs; many cats are spayed or neutered. However, it holds true that giving birth to litters, or contributing to these litters, is a state of affairs typical of the life-form “cat.”

claim that humans are different in kind from non-human animals, the additive conception does not preclude understanding rationality as a difference in degree between humans and non-human animals: while humans have one additional power of reason, this power is on par with other powers shared with non-human animals, as well as any powers that are only enjoyed by non-human animals. Further, if reason is simply an additional power in human beings, then the difference made by rationality does not necessarily affect all aspects of an animal's life. For instance, if animal desire is the same for both humans and cats, then there can be instances in which each party's desire for a food item is identical. By contrast, the transformative conception of rationality necessitates a complete difference in kind, in which even the simplest occurrences of human desire are qualitatively different from the desire of other animals.

The claim that there is a difference in kind between rational and nonrational animals may strike one as unwarranted or as having worrisome implications: for instance, one might worry that emphasizing a rational difference in kind implies an exaltation of "human beings above all other living creatures" (Boyle 2012: 424).²⁶ However, the transformative conception of rationality does not necessitate any claims about the superiority of rational animals *per se*. Boyle clarifies that a transformative theory only entails that accounts of human animal powers must be understood on their own terms, or in their role of "supporting a specifically rational form of life" (2012: 424).

In the remainder of this section, I argue that Hegel, in light of his discussion of habituation, should be read as providing a transformative theory of rationality. The reader does not need to be convinced that the rational difference in kind is real to accept my argument that Hegel is best read along these lines. However, highlighting the strengths of this conception will

²⁶ In "Essentially Rational Animals" Boyle considers objections to the difference in kind suggested by transformative theories in further detail (2012: 416-425).

demonstrate why bringing it to bear on Hegel is worthwhile. The salience of the rational difference in kind becomes clearer when attention is shifted from assertions about human and animal minds to the states of affairs relevant to different forms of life. While many nonrational animals can be attributed senses, behaviors, and intelligence, there is a qualitative difference between states of affairs we can expect in the lives of nonrational and rational animals. This is most evident in robust human sociality: while other animals could be understood as having some form of social relations, one can discern unique social developments, like markets, governments, and education systems, for which it is typical for human beings to participate in. For instance, human beings are a life-form whose typical state of affairs involves at least casually making judgments about animals as members of life-forms. While one might have reason to think other animals are capable of similar judgments, these nonrational animals do not appear to create records of these categorizations or dispute with one another over the details of these categorizations. Given the stark differences between the states of affairs typical of human life and the lives of non-human animals, there is reason to consider the difference made by rationality as a difference in kind.

3.2 Transformative Habituation

The functions Boyle associates with rationality are comparable to the role Hegel ascribes to habituation in rational life. The habit of seeing provides a clear example: in human beings, the sensation of sight, available to nonrational animals, is connected habitually with rational determinations like intellect, a stage of thinking that “works up the recollected representations into genera, species, laws ... in general into the categories” (*PM* §467). The habitual unity in human sight makes the act of seeing a conceptual act: upon seeing a lawnmower, the unity of

determinations allows for my immediate awareness that the object before me can be categorized precisely as a lawnmower.²⁷

Following Boyle, we can consider whether this habituated difference between rational and nonrational sight is indicative of additive or transformative rationality. An additive reading of the development of rational life in the *Encyclopedia* would hold that habituation is a power unique to, or added onto, human animality that grants rationality. As I previously noted, some readers take Hegel to separate human habituation from any aspect of animal life, thus suggesting that Hegel's conception of rationality is additive.²⁸ I have argued that Hegel's discussion of habituation in animal life demonstrates that for him habituation is essentially the same power for rational and nonrational life. However, someone who takes Hegel to provide an additive theory of rationality could object that, while a form of habituation exists in nonrational animal life, this habituation is a different, limited power from the habituation added to humans that allows for rationality. While Hegel does not explicitly make this claim, the additive interpretation could take Hegel's sole discussion of non-human animal habituation in natural death as implicit evidence. To avoid an impasse, I will argue that Hegel's treatment of rationality necessarily presupposes a transformative, rather than additive, conception of rationality, in which thorough habituation entails the realization of rational animality.

For Hegel to be considered an additive theorist of rationality, he would need to hold that there is an additional power, such as habituation, that rational animals possess that can monitor their animal powers. However, Hegel is hostile to descriptions of mind as "a mere aggregate of

²⁷ Hegel elaborates that the conceptuality in intellect is still incomplete when considered alone. In intellect, "the object falls apart into the form and the content... the *content* is *indifferent* to its *form*, while in *rational* or *conceptual* cognition the content *produces* its form *from its own self*" (PM §467/Z).

²⁸ Pinkard claims that, for Hegel, the difference between animality and rational animality "is marked by the fact that the soul can acquire habits" which can operate as rules for activity in human agency (2012: 29). Pinkard nonetheless associates Hegelian rationality with Boyle's transformative view, albeit without reference to habituation (2017: 12).

independent forces, each of which only interacts with the others, hence is only externally related to them” (*PM* §378/Z). Throughout “Subjective Mind,” Hegel describes different dimensions of human experience, like sensation, as determinations. Though he theoretically isolates these determinations to describe aspects of human mindedness, he denies that these determinations can be isolated or operate independently in human experience:

Determinations and stages of the mind, by contrast, are essentially only moments, states, determinations in the higher stages of development. As a consequence of this, a lower and more abstract determination of the mind reveals the presence in it, even empirically, of a higher phase... when lower stages are under consideration, it becomes necessary, in order to draw attention to them in their empirical existence, to refer to higher stages in which they are present only as forms. (*PM* §380)

The determinations involved in rational experience are interdependent aspects of its totality. Hegel’s assertion that “higher phases” are present in any consideration of lower determinations means that lone determinations cannot be understood independently in rational, perceptual experience: for example, in human sensation, “we can find all the higher phases of the mind as its content or determinacy” (*PM* §380). While many animals could see a microwave, an adult human cannot see this microwave without immediate conceptual consideration of this object, granted by intellect. Human sight, as a habitual unity, involves immediate awareness of what the seen object entails for human life: a human’s sight of the microwave includes immediate awareness of what the timer is counting down to, the relationship between these numbers, and the fact that it is heating an object for consumption. The immediacy of this conceptual information makes it impossible for a human to see the microwave free of concepts, as a non-human animal does. If humans cannot sense without corresponding rational determinations, then habituation is not a power that externally monitors sight. Rather, since Hegel describes human sight as a habitual unity of sensation and further determinations, habituation transforms what it means for humans to see in the first place.

It is not only sensations that are transformed by habituation: for Hegel, even the most basic aspects of rational, human life are products of habituation. Standing upright, for instance, is a habitual activity: an individual's posture is "made by his will into a habit, an *immediate, unconscious* posture" (*PM* §410/A). While nonrational animals are said to be driven by instinct, or "purposive activity acting unconsciously," Hegel describes all characteristic activities of human life as products of habituation, even those which are enacted unconsciously (*PN* §360). Accordingly, because the stage of actual soul is the product of habituation, it can be described as the "*first* appearance" of mind, and thus the onset of human life; for this reason, even relatively simple human behavior, like upright posture, laughing, and weeping, already possess the "spiritual tone" of habituation (*PM* §411/A). This spiritual tone demonstrates a departure from mere nature: while the behavior of non-human animals is driven by instinct, human beings demonstrate mindedness indicative of the realm of Spirit.²⁹ Throughout the "Anthropology," Hegel is silent on what role, if any, instinct plays in human life, marking habituation as not simply a power in human individuals, but the very basis of the human life-form.³⁰ Having habituation as this basis constitutes a crucial difference: because basic human activities are habitual, rather than instinctual, humans can bring them under their consideration, thus revising their second nature.³¹ For instance, while Hegel takes crying and laughter to be products of

²⁹ For Hegel, Spirit is "the goal of Nature" (§*PN* 376/Z). Subjective Mind aims to demarcate Spirit as individual, human subjectivity. In this context, Hegel's attribution of a spiritual tone to even basic elements of habituation in the "Anthropology" marks a crucial transition from mere Nature to Spirit (§*PM* 387).

³⁰ What would seem to be a lack of instinct in Hegel's discussion of human life results in children demonstrating "a far greater dependency and need than animals" (§*PM* 396/Z). In this discussion of early human life, Hegel neither affirms nor denies instinct in human beings. The child is merely said to possess sensation and feeling until "becoming an actual human being" by forming basic habits and grasping the external world's actuality (§*PM* 396/Z).

³¹ Importantly, this rational capacity to revise second nature does not allow for a return to a hypothetical first nature; while humans can revise the conceptual dimensions of sight, such as when they learn more about a concept, they cannot remove habituated conceptuality from sight altogether.

habituation for human development, someone who works at a funeral parlor must develop habits that obviate either outburst on the job. Instinct does not suffice for robust, human sociality.

While these early instances of habituation play a role comparable to the instincts of nonrational animals, they amount to a difference in kind between rational and nonrational animals. The thorough habituation enjoyed by human beings grants them access to conceptuality as well as the rational ability to bring habits under consideration and adjust them. Further, this difference in kind only becomes more apparent in what Hegel calls “more perfect” instances of habituation (*PM* §411/A), such as the habits of ethical life, which I visit in Section 4. However, even at the basic levels of posture and sight, Hegel’s construal of the differences between instinct and habituation provide good reason to adopt a transformative reading of Hegel. Because habituation is both a natural, animal power and a prerequisite for rational activity, the thorough habituation of human life amounts to a rational realization of animality.

3.3 Nonrational Instinct and Rational Habituation

I now return to the questions considered at the outset of this section. The first question was, why does Hegel discuss non-human animal habituation only in the case of natural death? Hegel’s selective discussion of natural death is a product of his general aim in “The Animal Organism,” which is to provide a general description of nonrational animal life-forms.³² Because nonrational animals have instinct as the basis of their activity, natural death is the only point at which habituation would become inevitable: if an animal avoids other types of death, habituation appears as the “inborn *germ of death*” (*PN* §375). Other, contingent habits can be formed: for instance, in order to receive food, a dog might habituate to sitting uncomfortably if that’s what its

³² In *The Animal Organism*, Hegel briefly considers some specific species, such as butterflies (*PN* §369/Z). However, Hegel’s primary concern is non-human animal life in general.

owner demands. Though the dog's behavior is habitual, as the dog has been trained to tolerate this discomfort, this habituation is in the service of its instinctual pursuit of food and largely circumstantial. A nonrational animal could end up relying on instinct, rather than habituation, for its entire life. For human beings, however, habituation plays a constant role in rational life, as all basic human activity, from standing upright to thought itself, requires habituation. Accordingly, the life of a rational being involves thorough habituation regardless of particular circumstances.

The second question was, if habituation is not sufficient for the achievement of rational life, what exactly is its role? Following the transformative conception of rationality I have attributed to Hegel, we can take a process of *thorough* habituation, rather than mere possession or employment of the power of habituation, to be the sufficient condition for rationality. Because actual soul and human consciousness are attained only once the soul's "bodiliness has been thoroughly trained and made its own," it is this thoroughness that transforms human animality (*PM* §411). Since non-human animals have instinct as the basis of their life-form, they do not need to undergo thorough habituation. Humans are a life-form whose proper state of affairs necessitates thorough habituation.³³ Consciousness, or "abstract universality in so far as it is *for* abstract universality," reveals the transformed relationship that rational animals have with the abstract universality granted by habituation: because humans thoroughly habituate to their environment, it is possible for the individual to develop a self that "excludes... the natural totality of its determinations as an object, as a world *external* to it," in contrast to the nonrational

³³ Human beings, like any life-form, do not always attain their proper or typical state of affairs. For instance, Hegel claims that a human being who fails to properly habituate suffers derangement, "a disease of the mind and body alike" (*PM* §408/Z). While this individual, in its mindedness, is a human being, she has not instantiated the thorough habituation that exemplifies the human form of life. Crucially, members of a life-form do not fail to be members of this life-form by failing to demonstrate a characteristic of it. Following Thompson, there is a wider context to consider when determining whether an organism is a member of a life-form: the fact that most mayflies die prior to breeding does not change the fact that the proper state of affairs for the life-form "mayfly" entails breeding and dying shortly after (2008: 67).

animal, which suffers the “limitation of sensation” alone and cannot reach this conception of self (*PM* §412/Z). Further, because humans have habituation, rather than instinct, as the basis of their activities, they develop and revise habits with respect to uniquely rational dimensions of their life. Proper rational life thus requires not only the habituation that results in actual soul, but also the continual development of habits within human sociality, such as the habits of ethical life. The difference in kind Hegel attributes to rational life, as well as the persisting importance of habituation to these rational developments, can be elaborated further through Hegel’s discussions of conflict in nonrational and rational life, respectively.

4 THE RATIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF CONFLICT

Having understood that Hegel's treatment of the power of habituation suggests a transformative conception of rationality, one can begin to appreciate the role habituation plays in both the struggle for recognition and the human sociality that follows. To demonstrate the importance of habituation, I first consider Hegel's discussion of animal violence in the *Philosophy of Nature*; according to this discussion, conflict in non-human animal life is devoid of satisfactory resolution, thus rendering non-human animal life anxious and unsafe. Then, I look to the struggle for recognition, first as it appears in the Jena *Phenomenology of Spirit* and then with the important clarifications made in the "Phenomenology" of the *Encyclopedia*. While the perpetual anxiety typical of this animal life demonstrates through contrast the significance of the struggle of recognition, this rational conflict, in turn, highlights the inadequacy Hegel attributes to nonrational life in nature. Further, understanding rational and nonrational life-forms in terms of one another will elucidate reasons to reject a popular dichotomy associated with the struggle for recognition: many readers assert that, by entering this struggle, a human being foregoes the species imperatives of her life, which a non-human animal would instinctively protect at all costs, for the sake of her commitment to independence.³⁴ Against this dichotomous view, I argue that Hegel does not take humans to be deprioritizing their species imperatives by partaking in this struggle. Rather, Hegel employs the struggle for recognition to demonstrate that what it means for rational animals to have species imperatives in the first place differs in kind from the species imperatives of their nonrational counterparts.

³⁴ See Pippin (2011) and Brandom (2019) for readings of Hegel that emphasize this dichotomy. Pippin characterizes life before the struggle as an individual simply being "an exemplar of the species requirements of [one's] species" (2011: 31).

4.1 Nonrational Violence

At first glance, Hegel's discussion of violent death in "The Animal Organism" presents an anomaly. In total, Hegel broaches four types of animal death, including natural death. Each form of death is said to be incited by a disparity between an individual animal's singularity and its universality, and this disparity is partially overcome in abstract universality; in natural death, for instance, the disparity arises from the animal's inability as a singular being to represent its universality, and the habit of living is adopted to achieve an abstract universality. Initially, violent death is characterized similarly: once a species develops "to the point of singularity," an individual of that species "distinguishes itself from others in and through its own self, and through the negation of them is *for itself*. The natural fate of the individuals in this hostile relationship, in which others are reduced to an inorganic nature, is a *violent death*" (PN §370). An animal actualizes its species not simply as a member of the species, but also as an individual, living being; the animal is an individual in virtue of its self-certainty as a being that produces itself through vital processes (PN §366). Because animals are individuated, they feel hostility toward others: individuals, even of the same species, appear as inorganic nature. However, despite Hegel's use of language which suggests a disparity between singularity and universality, violent death neither requires nor abstractly resolves such a disparity.

While the hostility that precedes violent death originates from the singularity of animal individuals, a violent death itself does not necessarily involve tension between the individual and its universality. In principle, members of the same species could kill one another to affirm their singularity, but Hegel does not make any claim that a violent death must be the result of a conflict within the species. Taking the idea of "violent death" outside the context of Hegelian philosophy, we might expect there to be other, more probable causes for violent death from

outside a species, such as natural predators and natural disasters. Citing Cuvier, Hegel claims that an individual animal is distinguished by its “*weapons*,” like teeth and claws, through which it “establishes and preserves itself” (*PN* §370/A). However, insofar as these weapons are traits specific to the individual’s life-form, the instantiation of these traits seems to distinguish the individual from members of other species more than from members of its own species.

Accordingly, the “natural fate” Hegel attributes to animals in their singularity does not describe a disparity that can be resolved within the species, but rather emphasizes the perennial threats that characterize the lives of non-human animals as “*insecure, anxious and unhappy*” in a “wholly alien” environment (*PN* §370/A).

Hegel claims that the disparity associated with violent death can only be resolved for non-human animals, albeit abstractly and partially, in sexual reproduction. For Hegel, reproduction is “the highest point of living nature”: “here, each of the two sexes senses in the Other not an alien externality but its own self, or the genus common to them both” (*PM* §381/Z).³⁵ Because reproduction is both an activity outlined by the individuals’ life-form and requires its participants to be of the same species, it necessitates a resolution to the tension between singularity and universality that violent death cannot. However, this resolution through reproduction also amounts to a failure: reproduction can only be the realization of the genus “*in principle*,” since its product, the offspring, is another singular being, “destined to develop into the same natural individuality, into the same difference and perishable existence” (*PN* §369).

Like in natural death, the resolution of the disparity between the animal’s singularity and

³⁵ The sexual relation is discussed as a form of death in the *Philosophy of Nature* alongside violent death, albeit one that only “lower animal organisms,” like butterflies, suffer (*PN* §369/Z). Notably, contemporary translations alter Hegel’s order of discussion: while the translation I cite throughout (Hegel 2004) places the sexual death paragraphs before violent death, the editor notes that Hegel initially placed violent death prior to sexual death (*PN* §370). Given the discussion I reference in the *Philosophy of Mind* (*PM* §381/Z), Hegel’s initial ordering seems most apt: violent death introduces the hostility that animals experience in their individualization, and the sexual relation (which, for some, results in death) provides a resolution to this hostile individuality.

universality achieves only an abstract universality. Additionally, this resolution does not occur within violent conflict, and it fails to change the fact that non-human animal existence is saturated with danger.

The failure to thoroughly resolve the disparity seen in the violent conflict of nonrational animals is to be expected given Hegel's treatment of nature: even though non-human animal life is the "most perfect form" of nature, it is only the mind that succeeds in producing "the individuality that is universal in and for itself" insofar as it "distinguishes itself from nature" in consciousness (*PM* §381/Z). "Almost less even than the other spheres of Nature, can the animal world exhibit within itself an independent, rational system of organization" (*PN* §370/A). To understand this failure more plainly, we must consider what Hegel takes a progressive conflict between members of a species to look like. In his discussion of the vital processes of non-human animals and "perfect" human animals, Hegel claims that, "in the human organism, these processes are developed in the fullest and clearest way, this highest organism therefore presents us with a *universal type*, and it is only in and from this type that we can ascertain and explain the meaning of the undeveloped organism" (*PN* §352/Z). Because animality is transformed in its rational realization, the struggle between human beings will inform us of the potential significance behind risking natural life.³⁶

4.2 Rational Struggle

Unlike the violence of non-human animal life, the struggle for recognition between human beings in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* successfully articulates a conflict between an

³⁶ "What belongs to nature as such lies behind the mind; it is true that the mind has within itself the entire content of nature, but the determinations of nature are in the mind in a radically different way from that in which they are in external nature" (*PM* §381/Z).

animal's singularity and the universality of its genus. Because the struggle must necessarily occur between self-conscious beings, it necessarily involves two human beings, rather than beings from two different species, for instance. Hegel claims that, prior to the development of self-consciousness, consciousness takes objects of experience to be for-itself. Because consciousness focuses on external objects, "what is true for consciousness is something other than itself"; in self-consciousness, the self, or the "I," becomes its own object: "being *for-itself* and being-*for-an-other* are one in the same" (*PS* §166). Hegel describes self-consciousness as desire, as self-consciousness consumes the worldly objects it encounters, sublating these external items in hopes of demonstrating certainty of itself as the "truth" of the external world, or the independent being for which the world exists as means (*PS* §175). This process of sublating objects, however, only provides temporary satisfaction: because the objects are consumed in the desire of self-consciousness, the certainty they provide cannot last much longer than the objects themselves. These instances of desire and their satisfaction are not substantially different from the urges Hegel ascribes to merely animal life (*PN* §360). Though a transformative reading of Hegel must assert that there is a difference in kind present even in basic instances of human desire, the satisfaction required by self-consciousness must involve an unmistakable departure from nonrational animal nature in order to highlight and affirm the spiritual difference in kind that is crucial for Hegel.³⁷

The difference between the conflict of rational and nonrational animals becomes evident once self-consciousness encounters another self-consciousness. As worldly objects cannot grant

³⁷ While Section 3 used the power of desire to illustrate the transformative difference in kind between rational and nonrational animals, Hegel's own use of the term "desire" is specific to human beings. While he describes what we might call merely animal desire in the terms "need" or "urge" in the *Philosophy of Nature* (*PN* §360), he saves the term "desire" for his discussion of human beings in Subjective Mind (*PM* §426). In the *Encyclopedia*, we might take "desire" as denoting the rational realization of urge.

the self-conscious subject lasting satisfaction, this subject discovers that satisfaction must be gained through recognition by another self-consciousness (*PS* §178). The satisfaction that follows from being recognized as a self-conscious being demonstrates a desire entirely separate from the satisfactions of merely animal life. Once two subjects encounter one another, each presents a threat to the other: because each self-consciousness being takes itself to be the external world's truth, and not a mere object, encountering a similarly-constituted being reminds them that they themselves are also connected to the natural world in their bodily externality.

Furthermore, each subject, in virtue of being self-conscious, has equal claim to being "the essential being" of the external world, causing uncertainty as to which subject deserves this title (*PS* §180). Consequently, each subject seeks to supersede her rival subject in a manner similar to her prior sublation of objects through desire. However, the attempt to supersede the other differs in this conflict, as the subject understands that, by engaging in this struggle, she can demonstrate her self-conscious independence and make the other subject recognize her as such. Crucially, this struggle for recognition can be nothing short of a "life-and-death struggle": to truly demonstrate their independence as the truth of the external world, the subjects must risk their lives in combat (*PS* §187-8). If either subject stopped short of staking life itself, she would fail to demonstrate the sincerity of her commitment to her belief that, as self-consciousness, she is independent from the natural, external world, which includes the body as the external foundation of her life.

At first, the result of the struggle for recognition is unequal and does not demonstrate a thorough departure from the contingencies of nonrational animal life. One subject avoids death by surrendering her independent existence: in preserving her life, she becomes the bondsman and is reduced to "thinghood" (*PS* §189). The bondsman labors for and lives in fear of the victorious subject, the master, who has proven her independence (*PS* §190). In addition to being unequal,

this relationship is unstable, and the fruits of the master's victory are short-lived. While the master sought to demonstrate her independence, she is now dependent on the laboring bondsman, who mediates the master's relationship to the external world. Further, because the master regards the bondsman as unessential, rather than as an independent, self-conscious subject, the recognition the bondsman provides cannot satisfy the master (*PS* §191-92). The bondsman, despite her position of servitude, is in a position to develop as a human being. Because the bondsman feared for her life, she has a newfound appreciation for her external, bodily existence (*PS* §194). Additionally, through her work for the master, her relationship with the external world changes: instead of destructively sublimating objects through desire, her work on the external world is constructive and "acquires an element of permanence" (*PS* §195). The moments of fear and work allow for desirous, self-consciousness to accept its necessary relationship with the external world.

Rightfully, this struggle is often interpreted as an important point of departure for human beings from mere animal nature. This departure for rational life is often associated with subjects' willingness to risk their lives: while a non-human animal would prioritize its survival as a living being, humans will risk their very existence for the sake of some other commitment.³⁸ Pippin, for instance, holds that the struggle "establishes whose claims are in fact claims *made by a subject* rather than the expression of life's imperatives because the struggle pushes the issue to the point where a complete indifference to life's imperatives determines the result" (2011: 85). On this reading, species imperatives are something a human must ignore entirely to demonstrate their

³⁸ There is a curious tendency in the secondary literature to compare the relationship between human and merely animal life to aspects of Japanese culture, particularly in the ritual suicide of samurai (Kojève 1993: 161-2). This comparison has been made most recently by Robert Brandom: in various circumstances, samurai were expected to commit suicide, demonstrating their commitment to their code as essential to themselves; failure to do so "would be the suicide of the samurai, who would only be survived by an animal" (2019: 238). While this comparison is perhaps made hastily and may lack historical accuracy, it exemplifies the extent to which a tradition of reading Hegel holds animal life and human values to be diametrically opposed in the struggle for recognition.

rational capacity to make claims and commitments in the struggle for recognition. Insofar as the struggle is a necessary step toward human sociality, it certainly demonstrates the distinctiveness of rational human life. However, this sharp division between the imperatives of natural life and rational activity is hastily drawn. Turning to Hegel's discussion of self-consciousness and habituation in the *Encyclopedia* and in the *Philosophy of Right*, we will see that the onset of human sociality is not a drastic departure from humanity's animal nature, but rather the further realization of this nature through habituation.

4.3 The Rational Difference in Kind

To understand the importance of habituation to the struggle for recognition, we must first recall that the "Anthropology" establishes consciousness as a product of habituation as it is undergone by human beings (*PM* §412). The "Phenomenology" of the *Encyclopedia* comes directly after the "Anthropology," tracing the developments of consciousness and self-consciousness. Because habituation works against an individual's immersion in particularities and allows for the existence of consciousness, it is a prerequisite to these developments. The master-bondsman relationship is followed by the final stage of self-consciousness, universal self-consciousness: "the affirmative awareness of oneself in the other self," and thus "*absolute independence*" insofar as each subject involved is "aware of its recognition in the free other, and is aware of this in so far as it recognizes the other and is aware that it is free" (*PM* §436). Because these individuals reciprocally recognize one another as free and independent, neither feels threatened by the other. The development of universal self-consciousness makes evident the contrast between nonrational animal life, in which animals experience perpetual anxiety in the face of

possible violence, and rational life, in which physical conflict and fear exist as necessary, albeit temporary, moments of development.

In the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel is explicit that the stage of universal self-consciousness only becomes possible through a specific habit. The “habit of obedience,” developed by the bondsman, allows one to submit to “the genuinely *universal*, rational will that *is in and for itself*” (*PM* §435/Z). At first, total fear motivates the bondsman to submit to the master. This initial fear is hardly different from the fear pervading non-human animal life, and the ensuing work is contingent insofar as it follows from the arbitrary will of the master. However, the master-bondsman relationship, while flawed, demonstrates the possibility for self-conscious beings to comply by means of their own habit, rather than an external source like terror. This does not mean that human beings who develop a habit of obedience always, unreflectively give in to demands made by anyone. Rather, through this habit, self-conscious beings are not hindered by their independence in cooperating with others. Hegel envisions this habit as operating in service of the rational will of universal self-consciousness: this habit allows those who have obtained “the capacity for self-government” through discipline to enter community and abide by universal law, which is “*in and for itself rational*” (*PM* §435/Z). Hegel asserts that it is through the mutual recognition of universal self-consciousness and submission to the rational will that human beings achieve freedom in sociality.

The freedom that human sociality aims toward is crucially habitual as well. Because the master-bondsman relationship is a prerequisite to universal self-consciousness, Hegel considers it to be the beginning of “man’s social life, the beginning of *states*” (*PM* §433/A). In turn, the rationally organized state expedites the formation of liberatory habits. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel illustrates this habituated freedom through the example of patriotism. Through reliable

institutions, the state establishes a relationship of trust with its citizens. A patriotic citizen “habitually knows that the community is the substantial basis and end” (*PR* §268). This patriotic unity with the state affects daily behaviors. For instance, Hegel notes that a trusting citizen can adopt the habit of taking walks late at night without a second thought (*PR* §268/A).

The patriotic habit of late-night walks demonstrates how the power of habituation broadly applies to various aspects of rational life. While the state protects its citizens, the citizens, as individual subjects, must habituate to this protection to fully appreciate it. On one hand, habituation plays the same liberatory role in these late-night walks as it does in non-human animal life: the habit, while mechanistic insofar as it can be employed without serious reflection, frees the individual from particularities she might otherwise fixate on, like the obviated possibility of natural dangers. Just as the habit of living inures an animal to all particularities of its life, leading to natural death, a habitual awareness of safety allows the citizen freedom from the particularities that, without a reliable state, she would have good reason to worry about.³⁹ On the other hand, this habit requires rationality. In order to trust the state, a citizen must possess some sociopolitical knowledge of the various functions and powers the state possesses as well as confidence in its reliability (*PR* §269). Having habituation as the basis of their life-form, rational individuals can habitually accept the rational organization of the state and, in turn, enjoy the state’s catalyzation of the liberatory ease of habituation.

Crucially, we do not need to share Hegel’s optimism for the state or its institutions to appreciate the core of his insight. The state, as a possibility, allows humans to develop habits that

³⁹ Of course, the state must truly be reliable for proper habituation. Novakovic differentiates “real” habits in Hegel, or those that provide genuine liberation, from “deformed” habits (2019: 889). Deformed habits would remain a form of second nature, but not provide ease to the individual. Here, we can think of a citizen having to walk home hurriedly or believing that she must avoid the police rather than rely on them when in danger. These instances of deformed habit suggest that the state’s institutions are unsatisfactory.

grant ease. By doing so, humans avoid the “perpetual violence and threat of dangers” which characterize nonrational animal life (*PN* §370/A). This contrast highlights the rational difference in kind. As seen in the life-and-death struggle, human beings can experience the life-threatening danger that exists in animal life. Further, they can appreciate the gravity of this threat: the bondsman, for instance, must experience “absolute fear,” and not “some lesser dread,” to grasp the importance of her embodiment as a necessary aspect of her self-conscious existence, rather than something external to her (*PS* §196). However, while this terror is an unchanging aspect of non-human animal life, it is the catalyst for robust and beneficial sociality in human life.

By considering Hegel’s discussion of violence in non-human animal life alongside the struggle crucial to human sociality, we can see how Hegel has made good on his promise that humans, as the “highest organism,” serve to elucidate “the meaning of the undeveloped organism,” or the nonrational animal as a broad life-form (*PN* §352/Z). For nonrational animals, conflict within a species is not necessitated. Further, because instinct already operates as the basis of animal life, habituation is circumstantial rather than thorough, such that animals can neither achieve consciousness nor, through the developments of consciousness, distance themselves from the dangers present in nature. While sexual reproduction provides some resolution to the disparity between an animal’s singularity and universality, this resolution is separate from violent conflict itself and only attains an abstract universality. The development of consciousness in human beings through habituation makes possible social developments which, in turn, reduce the anxieties of natural life and grant rational beings ease. The ease brought about by social progress allows for the mind to thoroughly distinguish itself from nature through activities like thought, which require habituation as their basis (*PM* §410/A). The significance of

conflict between rational life-forms allows for an understanding of what precisely conflict between nonrational life-forms fails to achieve.

Because the habituation expected of human life is essential for the eventual successes of human conflict, it would be incorrect to assert that the life-and-death struggle displays a human individual's choice of values or commitments *over* the imperatives of her species. Hegel stresses that "life points to something other than itself, viz. to consciousness" (*PS* §172). Life, whether rational or nonrational, has this end, though only the former achieves it through a thorough habituation. Consequently, it would be a mistake to pit the rational capacity to make commitments against the species imperatives of rational animals. The capacity for rational beings to have commitments, like their commitment to independence, is not separate from the priorities delimited by their life-form. While the struggle for recognition illuminates a crucial development in which human beings must prioritize their claim to independence over the preservation of their life, this conflict is one *between* the species imperatives we can attribute to the rational realization of animality.

The state of affairs Hegel attributes to human life demonstrates that the rational life-form delimits a multiplicity of species imperatives. These species imperatives, whether they involve the preservation of one's life or the developments of consciousness, crucially involve habituation. A direct example of habituation's relevance to the rational state of affairs appears in the habits of ethical life, which demonstrate "the content of freedom" as seen in patriotic habits: it is typical of human beings to habitually expect services from the rationally organized state, and it is liberating to have such expectations (*PM* §410/A). Hegel does not treat rational human activity and animal nature as mutually exclusive aspects of human life. Rather, Hegel treats habituation as a throughline connecting various stages of human development. Accordingly,

human beings do not defy their animal nature in the struggle for recognition, but instead display the realization of an animal nature that is different in kind from nonrational animals.

Undergirded by habituation, human life exhibits a complex multiplicity of species imperatives aiming toward a liberatory ease that is unattainable for nonrational animal life.

5 HEGEL AND THE CLASSICAL VIEW OF RATIONALITY

Because I have constructed and defended my interpretation of Hegelian habituation through appeal to transformative theories of rationality, I must consider the possibility that bringing Boyle's contemporary theory to bear on the *Encyclopedia* neglects crucial differences between the historical contexts of these thinkers and hastily conflates the frameworks they utilize. For instance, on the surface, there is a technical concern that follows from this interchange: while transformative theorists hold that animal powers are transformed in their rational realization, I have argued that Hegel regards habituation as essentially the same power in rational and nonrational life. This claim, held alongside my argument that the thorough habituation Hegel associates with rational life amounts to a transformation of animality for humans, produces a strange conclusion: habituation, despite being an animal power, is *not* transformed in human beings. If Hegel holds that some animal powers are not transformed in rational life, then he deviates from Boyle's blueprint for transformative theories.⁴⁰

Though Hegel does not satisfy this specific requirement for a transformative theory of rationality, he nonetheless provides arguments for the underlying conclusion of transformative theories: rationality describes a unique realization of animality. Hegel's proximity to transformative theories is evident not only in his discussion of habituation in rational and nonrational life but also in his appropriation of Aristotle's work on the soul to delineate these forms of life.⁴¹ For Boyle, differences in kind between life-forms follow the "classical," Aristotelian succession of vegetative, appetitive, and rational souls: each soul represents a "mode

⁴⁰ See Houlgate (2016) for discussion of Hegel's deviation from the McDowellian conceptualism that provides the basis for Boyle's transformative conception of rationality.

⁴¹ See Ferrarin (2001) for discussion of Aristotle's influence on Hegel. See Malabou in particular for discussion of Hegel's appropriation of Aristotelian souls to his own, anthropological, ends (2005: 39).

of organization characteristic of life” (2012: 409).⁴² Hegel’s treatment of souls does not simply mirror Aristotle’s: while Hegel grants all living beings souls, he takes the proper actualization of the soul to only occur alongside the emergence of human life. Insofar as only the human soul is deemed “actual,” Hegel demonstrates, even more clearly than Aristotle, a commitment to the position that there is a difference in kind between humans, who attain rational mindedness, and all other life-forms in nature (*PM* §411). While Hegel’s arguments diverge from Boyle’s, Hegel nonetheless places himself in conversation with Boyle’s earliest, historical example of transformative theories, and his conception of rationality favors the general thesis of transformative theories of rationality.

⁴² In *De Anima*, these souls are attributed to plant, animal, and rational life, respectively (415b20-416b32; 432a20-433a9).

6 CONCLUSION

Boyle suggests that additive theories of rationality enjoy an implicit popularity: because many believe that rational and nonrational animals share basic powers like sight, a common conclusion is that the difference between these life-forms must come from a “separate and additional” power (2016: 2-4). This implicit commitment might explain why readers of the *Encyclopedia* are reticent to attribute the habituation operative throughout human life to nonrational animals. I have argued that Hegelian habituation cannot be properly understood as a power unique to rational beings. While thorough habituation is necessary for rational life, this same power of habituation must, by Hegel’s lights, be essentially the same, natural power for nonrational animal life. My interpretation has significant consequences for how we should read both the *Encyclopedia* and Hegel’s work in general. Notably, humans are not rational beings that forgo their animality in a struggle for recognition. Rather, the life-and-death struggle reveals the nuances of what it means to be a rational animal. Because habituation is the basis of rational animality, humans must risk their lives in order to both arrive at the reciprocal recognition of proper human sociality and enjoy the liberatory ease of subsequent habituation. This risk is not a renunciation of the importance of animal life, but instead an important moment in rational animal life.

This transformative reading of Hegel also exhibits the relevance of Hegel’s thought to contemporary debates in philosophy of mind. Namely, by understanding how thorough habituation amounts to a rational realization of animality, one sees how Hegel’s conception of rationality is in conversation with the transformative tradition of rationality explicated by Boyle. A goal of Hegel’s from the outset of *Philosophy of Mind* is “to disclose once more the sense of those Aristotelian books” in which Boyle locates the origin of transformative theories (*PM*

§378). Hegel's discussion of habituation as both a possibility for animal life and a necessary, transformative power for rational life demonstrates that he is rightly considered a precursor to the transformative conception of rationality.

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