doi:10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 *Hegel Bulletin*, 47/2, 173–194
© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hegel Society of Great Britain. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

Recognition from First to Second Nature, and Back Again

Italo Testa

Abstract

In this paper I will first argue, with reference to Hegel's Jena writings, that the notion of recognition, and the constitution of practical self-consciousness, emerge from the process of first nature and presuppose the capacities of a pre-reflexive self. Then I will show that both the notions of habit and second nature, which Hegel in the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Philosophy of Right* places at the basis of his understanding of the social and historical world, and his conception of embedded freedom as liberation, are themselves not intelligible except in their dialectical relation to the first nature of which they are reconfigurations. I will then show how the dialectical relation to first nature accounts for processes of social reification, understood as deadening forms of forgetting the living root of sociality, and thus how it can account in a social diagnostic sense for some aspects of the contingency, plurality and fragmentation of contemporary social processes.

I. Introduction

In the course of the last three decades, there has been a growing tendency to consider recognition as the grounding principle of both Hegel's practical and social philosophy. These perspectives contrast with earlier interpretations that focused on self-consciousness and ethical life, thereby marking the recognition-based approach as a significant departure.

It has been widely assumed in recent literature that the Hegelian Spirit—the social structure of the historical world of individual agents and institutions—is constituted through recognition (*Anerkennung*), i.e., through processes of reciprocal interaction.[1] Participating in the social practices of spirit is here both a precondition of freedom—understood as *bei sich selbst sein im Anderen*—and a form of its exercise: freedom is essentially social freedom.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Furthermore, recognition has been widely assumed to be a strong bootstrapping process, that is, a self-positing and self-justifying normative social phenomenon, intelligible within and of itself and independently of anything external to it.[2] From the very beginning, then, recognition is being situated within the social and historical world of agents. As a consequence, an image of spirit arises as something whose genesis and constitution can be investigated independently from natural processes.

Such a picture tends to support a very thin image of sociality—and of social freedom—as something entirely normative, that is, as something that can be understood only in terms of the norms that are constitutive of it, regardless of the natural processes that are involved in these phenomena. One reason for not being satisfied with this as constituting the whole story is the fact that such a picture tends to forget how much the notion of spiritual freedom is entwined with first-nature processes in Hegel's texts. While early interpretations by Pippin (2008) and Pinkard (1994) emphasized the historical and institutional dimensions of recognition, recent scholarship is increasingly focusing on its naturalistic foundations and broader applicability across Hegel's system.[3] The most significant way to demonstrate this, I think, is to draw explicit and detailed attention to the way in which, for Hegel, recognition—and with it freedom—emerges out of nature, in a way that precedes the spiritual sphere and is not simply identical with it.

If spirit is constituted through recognition, then the fact that recognition somehow depends on first nature—as I will argue in the first part of this paper—will have deep consequences for how we are to conceive the genesis and the structure of the social and historical world, and the very notion of social freedom that participation in this world makes possible.

Secondly, I will argue that even at the spiritual level recognition cannot be conceived in isolation, but must rather be thought by means of the notions of second nature and habit, which in turn cannot be decoupled from their relation to first nature. The move from first-nature recognition to second nature implies a dialectical, embodied notion of freedom.

Finally, in the third part of the paper I will argue that, once we understand recognition in terms of embodied second nature, then we have to take into account how much the contingency, the fragility and the plurality of second nature affect our notion of freedom.

II. First nature, recognition, and practical interaction

In order to regain such Hegelian insights, I will briefly proceed to reconstruct one aspect of the natural genesis of spiritual consciousness in Hegel's Jena writings,

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

aiming to show that this reconstruction lets us understand the genesis and the structure of some fundamental capacities that are presupposed by recognitive interaction and that are also constitutive of practical freedom.

Already in the *Differenzschrift* Hegel had introduced 'recognition' (*Anerkennung*) as a first natural phenomenon that concerns the 'genus' (*Gattung*), and the polarity of sexes. He wrote:

> the individual seeks and finds itself in another. In the animal the light remains more intensely inward; it posits itself as more or less changeable voice, or in other words, it posits animal individuality as something subjective in universal communication: it posits itself as cognizing and to be recognized [*sich erkennend und anzuerkennend setzt*]. (Hegel 1977: 178/73)

In the *Differenzschrift* recognition is understood as a phenomenon rooted in first nature and one that manifests itself as a mechanism of coordination between natural interactions aimed at sexual reproduction.

In the fragments numbered 1–15 of the 1803–04 lessons natural recognition plays a crucial role in the move from philosophy of nature to philosophy of spirit (see Hegel 1975), in a way that further develops the intuition according to which consciousness constitutes itself as a form of organization of the living being.

In the positing of the individuated structure of the living organism, the notion of *Gattung* plays an important role. Organic individuality is defined as the 'absolute middle term [*absolute Mitte*]' between two processes: the cycle through which the singular organism preserves itself, and the cycle through which the *Gattung* endures through sexual reproduction of individuals. In this sense Hegel writes:

> The idea of organic individuality is *genus*, universality; it is infinitely an other to itself and in this otherness [is] itself, *exists* in the division of the sexes, each of which is the entire idea, but such that it, relating to itself as to an other, intuits itself in otherness as itself and supersedes this opposition. (Hegel 1975: 185–86)

While the vegetal organism is a form of life deprived of selfhood, with the animal organism a process of individuation begins and a first form of 'natural self' [natürliches *Selbst*] comes into being. Still, in animal life the *Gattung* is a living universal that does not exist as such: it exists only through the infinite division and differentiation of individuals and thus as their 'contact' [*Berührung*] through intercourse.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The recognitive structure of 'relating itself to itself as to an other' is here rooted at the first nature organic level: the very possibility of relating itself to itself is linked to the possibility of intuiting oneself in another organism of the same species. It is not by chance that Hegel names sexual differentiation a 'doubling' [*Verdopplung*] (Hegel 1975: 240), employing the word that in the Frankfurt writings had been used to refer to intersubjectivity understood as doubling of life.

In this sense recognition has its early roots in animal life. This proto-recognitive capacity becomes foundational to the development of more complex social and spiritual forms. Hegel views recognition as something embedded in the natural structure of living organisms, where individual beings intuitively 'find themselves in another'. This early form of recognition, or 'doubling', is central to Hegel's understanding of relational life up to his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* where he will describe this as a 'unity' that each organism achieves by relating to others (*Enz*: §351).[4] The Jena lessons are crucial here for unpacking the recognitive structure that also underlies Hegel's reconstruction of sexual differentiation in his mature writings. Hegel specifically uses sexual differentiation as an example of proto-recognition, as it represents a basic yet profound encounter with otherness that is intrinsic to natural life. Sexual differentiation, as Hegel sees it, involves an 'urge' toward unity that simultaneously acknowledges difference (*Enz*: §367). Here, Hegel portrays sexual differentiation as a preliminary doubling in which each organism's identity is linked to an interaction with the other. This proto-recognitive form of interaction does not yet entail self-conscious reflection but lays the groundwork for higher forms of recognition. Sexuality here is not simply a biological function but an expression of life's intrinsic relationality, where the organism seeks itself in the other and, in doing so, establishes a proto-social structure.[5]

Furthermore, if we now come back to the Jena writings, in designating organic individuality as a 'middle term [*Mitte*]', an 'essence [*Wesen*]' and a 'movement [*Bewegung*]', Hegel again finds at the organic level some aspects that will be constitutive of the dynamics of conscious freedom.

In this way we have identified at the first-nature level at least two presuppositions of practical freedom: i.e., individuality—since freedom is predicated of the individual—and the basic recognitive capacity of finding oneself in the other, understood as constitutive of the logical core of freedom. Both first-nature individuality and first-nature recognition are necessary, even if not sufficient conditions of freedom.[6]

So far we have explored one strand of the relation between recognition and first nature, appreciating how *Anerkennung* is rooted in the natural structure of the living organism within its species.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

One could further develop such an analysis of the aspects of the Jena writings that are relevant for the notion of freedom. Firstly, by reconstructing the Hegelian conception of the proto-intentional organic self and of its proprioceptive and communicative structure (see in particular Hegel 1975: 235, 247). Secondly, by approaching the Hegelian analysis of the practical structure of 'appetite [*Begierde*]'—understood as a form of practical intentionality—and of the forms of conflictive, proto-recognitive interactions arising from it (see Hegel 1975: 241–42). Thirdly, by treating the question of the animal voice understood as an expressive act that manifests the natural being's longing to see its own individuality recognized (see Hegel 1975: 239, 239n1). Fourthly, by analysing the form of recognition that manifests itself with procreation and that constitutes the natural root of reason as a first form of objectivation (see Hegel 1975: 244).

Let me stress that the appreciation of the first natural roots of recognition along these lines has deep consequences also for the way we are to conceive of practical intentionality, practical agency and also of the social process of objectivation as realization of freedom, since both practical individuality and the process of objectivation emerge out of nature and are not just a bootstrapping phenomenon. In claiming that free agency 'is a kind of collective social construct, and achieved status', understood as 'an artificial status', Pippin assumes that recognitive constitution and realization of natural potentials are mutually exclusive things (see Pippin 2008: 196, 197). Once we realize that recognition emerges from nature, and that the structures of free agency have a foothold both in first and in second nature, we are no longer obliged to commit ourselves to such a strong constructivist view of Hegelian sociality.

In Hegel's lessons a proto-intentional self, endowed with communicative capacities and self-feeling, emerges from natural interactions. This natural self already has a pre-reflective form of natural recognitive consciousness, and this form of natural recognitive consciousness is necessarily presupposed by the reflective consciousness which will develop in institutionalized, that is spiritual, forms of life. These can be interpreted as second-nature re-organizations, expansions and stabilizations of that recognitive consciousness, which had already emerged within first natural life, but develops here at a more complex level.

III. Second nature and *Befreiung*

Let me now come to the relation between recognitive freedom and second nature. In what follows I will argue that recognitive freedom cannot be conceived in isolation, not only because it is rooted in first nature, but also because its social and historical development—that is the process of spiritual objectivation

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of recognitive relations—must be thought by means of the notion of second nature and habit.

In the history of thought habits, customs, characters, the virtues proper to human individuals or determinate forms of life (*Bildung*, technicality, ethical life, culture, Right, the State) have been characterized as second nature (see Rath 1996). We can distinguish two principal spheres to which the notion can refer, namely: a subjective sphere, and an objective sphere. The first case refers to an individual's dispositions, capacities and attitudes qualified as second nature, while the second refers to forms of life, social relations and institutions.

In the *Encyclopaedia*, in particular in the section dedicated to 'Anthropology', the notion of second nature is presented as a determination of subjective spirit, hence in its sense of internal second nature, in the context of the discussion of 'habit': 'Habit has rightly been called a second nature: nature, because it is an immediate being of the soul, a second nature, because it is an immediacy posited by the soul' (*Enz*: §410R).

In the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* of 1820 we find the explicit definition of objective, external second nature. Here second nature is predicated of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), in so far as ethical life to be such has to objectify itself in social habits of recognitive interaction stabilized through habit and internalized by individuals. In this way second nature presents itself as a determination of objective spirit and helps us to understand that spirit in general is something that is alive, a second level of the naturalness of life. Accordingly, Hegel says of second nature that 'it is *spirit* living and present as a world, and only thus does the substance of spirit begin to exist as spirit' (*Rph*: §151).

Following this use Hegel also qualifies in *Rph*: §4 the objectivation of spirit—its becoming an historical world of social relations and institutions—as the process of actualization of freedom. He understands this process in terms of second nature:

> The basis [*Boden*] of right is the realm of *spirit* in general and its precise location and point of departure is the *will*; the will is *free*, so that *freedom* constitutes its substance and destiny [*Bestimmung*] and the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom, the world of spirit produced from within itself as a second nature. (*Rph*: §4)

What does it mean to understand freedom in terms of second nature? Freedom is both the presupposition—the substance—and the outcome—the destiny—of objectivation. On the one hand, this means that the objective structure of freedom—and of second nature—that is actualized in the world of objective spirit, presupposes subjective spirit, that is the first-nature structures of practical agency and the process of their becoming subjective second nature through

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

habituation.[7] In other terms, this means that freedom has always to become second nature. The process of its *Verwirklichung*, of its realization, is always also a movement from first nature to second nature: a permanent movement of 'liberation [*Befreiung*]' (*Enz*: §386) from the level of first nature, whose constitutive structure is rooted in the mechanism of habit.

III.i. Habit and the mechanism of freedom

Let us now consider more closely the section of the *Encyclopaedia* in which Hegel deals most explicitly with the theme of second nature and habit.[8] *Begierde*—understood by Hegel as appetite or instinctive desire (*Enz*: §426)—represents a type of animal consciousness, of self-consciousness still immersed and sunken in first naturalness. We have here a consciousness that moves in the state of first nature with a pre-reflective form of self-relation and a practical orientation in the environment. This self-feeling is characterized as a 'particular embodiment [*eine besondere Verleiblichung*]' (*Enz*: §408) and will later present itself in Hegel's treatment of self-consciousness within the struggle for recognition as the self-feeling of corporeal self-consciousness.

The body, seen as a vital manifestation of self-consciousness and its expressive sign, is precisely that which is affected by the further activity of the soul, namely 'habit [*Gewohnheit*]'. Habit is understood here as a mode of natural existence (*Enz*: §409), since it possesses the non-reflective immediacy and the spontaneity of natural functions. At the same time it is the precipitate of an activity through which first-nature corporeal dispositions are shaped and modified, through repetition and practice, until they form 'aptitudes, or skills [*Geschicklichkeit*]' that function as 'mechanisms of the intelligence', that is, as a 'second nature'. Embodiment is thus the process that, through the mechanism of habituation, connects the levels of first and second nature.

Furthermore, it is important to note the strategic meaning of Hegel's statement that 'the form of habit embraces all the kinds and all the grades of the activity of spirit [*die Form der Gewohnheit umfaßt alle Arten und Stufen der Tätigkeit des Geistes*]' (*Enz*: §401R). The theory of habit, and thus the theory of internal second nature, is, indeed, the decisive junction for formulating the conception on the basis of which all properly so-called spiritual activities—from upright posture to the higher faculties of consciousness and free, reflective self-consciousness—not only presuppose for their content the corporeal constitution of determinate aptitudes but are also accompanied at all levels by the form of second-nature immediacy. From what we may call *the argument for the embodiment of Spirit*, the *cogito* itself presupposes the body and its habitual dispositions. In this respect it already has, for the individual, the immediate form of a second nature.[9] As such, second nature cannot be detached from the ongoing process of habituation of first nature. In this sense Hegel writes:

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> Thinking, too, however free and active in its own pure element it becomes, no less requires habit and familiarity (this impromptuity or form of immediacy), by which it is the property of my single self where I can freely and in all directions range. It is through this habit that I come to realize my existence as a thinking being. Even here, in this spontaneity of self-centered thought, there is a partnership of soul and body (hence, want of habit and too-long-continued thinking cause headache); habit diminishes this feeling, by making the natural function an immediacy of the soul. (*Enz*: §410R)

Habit, understood as 'mechanism of self-feeling' (*Enz*: §410R), thus provides the basis for the existence of the 'I'—of self-consciousness—as a free thinking being whose constitution is mediated by recognition's movement of duplication. The passages just discussed show that freedom is not merely an inner spontaneity but is realized only in practices that are sedimented in the body as habits. In this way freedom reveals itself as an embodied, recognitive structure, whose 'second naturalness' must be understood through the mechanisms and dialectic of habit.

Habit as second nature is closely connected with Hegel's conception of freedom. In fact, the very notion of 'liberation [*Befreiung*]', which is needed to understand spirit's objectivation as a process of actualization of freedom, is rooted in the concept of habit he develops at the level of subjective spirit (*Enz*: §410R). Habits, while instituting themselves as mechanisms, at the same time make it possible for us to free ourselves from certain routine activities and to apply such energies elsewhere and in an expanded way. Individual and socio-institutional habits are understood by Hegel as *mechanisms of freedom*—a sort of paradoxical, antinomial notion.

This allows us to appreciate how much the dialectic of second nature affects freedom.[10] Second nature is liberation from the necessity of first nature, but at the same time presents itself as a mechanism, that is as affected by a certain kind of necessity, and can be the object of a first-nature description in terms of causal, mechanistic processes.[11] Furthermore, the idea that habituation is the work through which second nature takes the place of the original, purely natural will, does not imply that first nature is thereby definitively abandoned:

> Education is the art of making human beings ethical: it considers them as natural beings and shows them how they can be reborn, and how their original nature can be transformed into a second, spiritual nature so that this spirituality becomes habitual to them. (*Rph*: §151)

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Bildung is a permanent task of *Befreiung* an ongoing transition from merely animal first nature to spiritual second nature.[12] In so far as life goes on, habituation always presupposes that there is something that is not completely sublated in spiritual nature. That is why for Hegel total habituation is death (*Rph*: §152A).

III.ii. Structures of freedom

Hegel's theory of habit introduces habit as a foundational mechanism connecting first and second nature. While habit plays a central role in shaping second nature, it is part of a broader dialectic within Hegel's conception of spirit. This dialectic demonstrates that while habit stabilizes certain capacities, it is also dynamic, continuously shaping subjective spirit in interaction with objective social institutions.[13] This makes habit essential to freedom, since habit is the way spirit transcends mere first nature without entirely escaping its influence. Habit provides stability, yet it is also adaptable, reinforcing subjective spirit's interaction within the social world. This underscores freedom as both dynamic and structured, where habit serves as a medium that maintains connections between individual embodiment and the broader social sphere. Through the dialectical process, habit allows individuals to move beyond mere first-nature constraints, establishing second nature in a way that preserves continuity with natural inclinations. Habit thus participates in Hegel's conception of freedom as an ongoing liberation: a progressive but non-final movement that reconfigures first nature's influences within the evolving context of spirit and society.

Let us now come to a first, preliminary conclusion. According to my reading, Hegel's texts converge in the joint argument of the *necessary expressive embodiment of Spirit*.

The foundational role of habit requires that Spirit has its manifestation in corporeal expressivity. The theory of second nature, in its dual subjective and objective aspect, also requires a dual aspect of embodiment. Spirit has to be embodied both in the organic body of individuals—in its first-nature living structures constantly reshaped through habituation—and in the inorganic body of institutions (see Testa 2009).

As a consequence, an embodied notion of freedom arises: social freedom, i.e., participation in spiritual ethical life, is not just a normative self-justifying, bootstrapping phenomenon, but must rather be understood in terms of the dialectic of second nature and thus as embodied freedom.[14]

So far we have argued that some basic structures of Hegel's concept of freedom—such as recognition, individuality, practical intentionality, finding oneself in otherness, *Befreiung*, objectivation—have a foothold in (first) nature,

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and have to develop themselves and be stabilized into a second nature in order to actualize rational embodied freedom.

Such a notion of embodied freedom is a dialectical one because of the peculiar structure of second nature. On the one side, such a dialectic refers to the relation between first and second nature and its mediation through the mechanism of habit. On the other side, such a dialectic is strengthened by the internal mediation between objective and subjective second-nature characteristics of institutionalized human society. By virtue of this double-edged dialectic, of this triangularization between first nature, and subjective and objective second nature, on the one hand social and institutional bodies—ethical substance—present the form of a social second nature, which has the stabilized configuration of the mechanism of habit, sedimented in social practices, and which acts on individuals with a first-natural appearance of necessity (*Rph*: §146; *Enz*: §484). At the same time, subjective dispositions, individual powers shaped through institutions (*Rph*: §145), are not completely constituted and determined by external second nature—also due to their grounding in living first nature—and can thus, in turn, react back upon objective social structures (*Rph*: §147). Accordingly, the reproduction of social space presupposes the exercise of individual recognitive capacities that belong to our first nature, while the process of *Bildung* simultaneously reshapes these very capacities.

Here we are confronted with an intimate tension, connected with the very notion of second nature and its double-edged subjective and objective sides. This has to do with the fact that, due to the notion of freedom as being with oneself in otherness, the actualization of freedom implies its objectivation—its becoming a world of practices and institutions that are trans-subjective and exist independently of our subjective will, even though co-produced by us. Thus the actualization of freedom in a social body of institutions and norms implies that recognitive interactions must be embodied in a relatively stable objective order. This order confronts us as a world that, like first nature, exists independently of our individual wills and thereby exerts a kind of normative constraint that goes beyond our immediate subjectivity. That is why the spirit, understood as the world of second nature, presents itself with some of the traits of physical first nature, that is, as 'substance', 'destiny' of individual existence (*Rph*: §4, §151), 'absolute power' (*Rph*: §146). And that is why in the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel will say that habit as second nature on the one hand 'makes a man free', and on the other 'makes him his slave' (*Enz*: §410). On the one hand, second nature is 'posited'—implies the action and co-production of individual agents and of their first nature. On the other hand, its naturalness is a real mode of 'being' and as such presents itself with an immediacy and givenness that goes beyond

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

individual agents, provided that it remains in touch with its footing in living first nature.

Here first nature is double edged as well as second nature. First nature operates both from below (as grounding: living, spontaneous first nature) and from above (as a return of repressed first nature, appearance of necessity: ossified, dead first nature). First nature operates thus in a dual mode, both as living first nature in which practical activity is rooted, and as dead first nature in which the process of objectivation of second nature can reify, ossify and reduce itself to something dead (second nature as return of the repressed living first nature as mere necessity, as mortuum).

Due to the double-edged character of both first and second nature, the living conciliation between the subjective and objective sides of second nature, within their triangulation with first nature, is not given in itself,[15] and is rather a dynamic process in which subjects strive towards finding themselves at home—*beisichselbst*, by themselves—in the world of practices and institutions they live in as expressive of their freedom. The process of actualization of freedom in which objective spirit consists is thus a hard work of dialectical liberation, of *'Befreiung'* (*Rph*: §149), of making themselves free.

Hegel seems to assume that within the borders of the modern, liberal national state and its institutions a rational stabilization of ethical life—a stabilization of second nature—is at hand, provided that it does not ossify, that it remains a dynamic, plastic process of adaptation and does not forget its grounding in living first naturalness. This makes it possible for the subjective and objective sides to reconcile themselves, and thus for subjects to appropriate reflectively the authority of social institutions as something not alien to them (*Rph*: §147), as something that is normatively binding for them (*Rph*: §148). But if one looks at it from the perspective of world history—the very end of the doctrine of objective spirit both in the *Elements* and in the *Encyclopaedia*—then the dialectic between first nature, subjective and objective second nature, freedom and necessity, is still open and the living stabilization of second nature reveals itself to be rather a contingent, fragile historical formation destined to collapse.

IV. Fragmentation

In this last section I will argue that, once we understand recognition in terms of embodied second nature, we then have to take into account how much the contingency, the fragility and the plurality of second nature affect freedom and have to do with its relation to first nature.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IV.i. Plurality of ethical life

The conception of embodied recognitive freedom appears to meet with a number of problems in presenting itself as a model for understanding contemporary social spaces. Such problems appear to stem from two main causes: the ineliminable fact of the plurality of forms of ethical life and of models of good life; and the exhaustion of the belief that our form of ethical life is the only one that can make a claim to be rational.

In the presence of these conditions the virtuous circle between internal second nature and external second nature—their conciliation—that the model demands as a condition of the rational ethical stabilization of recognitive relations is no longer a *fait accompli* within the borders of the national state. Nor can we any longer be readily assured that our second-natural habits are good habits.

The first-natural anomie of the global space of international relations, which in the Hegelian conception was modelled on the state of nature of a struggle for permanent recognition without ethical stabilization (*Rph*: §§331–33), now appears to invest the very second naturality of the social space of national communities.

IV.ii. Dialectics of second nature as epochal diagnosis

Hegel's model seems to require a virtuous circle between internal second nature and external second nature in so far as it requires a stable but dynamic interaction that aligns individual dispositions (subjective spirit) with social structures (objective spirit). This virtuous circle requires a balanced interaction between subjective and objective spirit, which supports the realization and expansion of freedom within the community, fostering both personal and institutional growth.

However, when second nature becomes ossified, it disrupts this balance, pushing social norms back to a rigid, first-nature-like state, which leads to normative crises and social fragmentation. I do not believe that this situation means that the theory of second nature must be abandoned, even though the hope that it can give rise to a no longer revocable stabilization of our form of life has been dashed. Moreover, Hegel's concept of second nature has a critical potential that can be helpful in explaining this reversion, showing how second nature can become a 'frozen spirit' that limits freedom.

In the theory of second nature, in fact, conceptual resources are available that can help us deal with several particular aspects of contemporaneity. Accordingly, the *Hegelian discovery of the dialectical character of second nature*, radicalized by the school of suspicion and by the critique of ideology (Nietzsche, Lukács, Adorno) in terms of the *paradoxicality* of the relation between first and second nature, can provide a model of epochal diagnosis for the analysis of the phenomena of social fragmentation typical of our time.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The revisited theory of recognition is thus also a gateway to these conceptual resources, at least in so far as the phenomenon of the *Kampf um Anerkennung* appears to be inseparable from the phenomenon of instability of second nature that reveals itself in some aspects of the contemporary fragmentation of social freedom.

IV.iii. Paradoxicality of second nature

We have touched on the dialectical relation between first and second nature a number of times. Hegel does not allow this dialectic of *zweite Natur* to reach the limit where the relation between first and second nature would become an ambiguous and uncontrollable mirroring. Although Hegel sees Spirit as a stable acquisition, not destined to regress, it is also clear that the structural character of the *Kampf um Anerkennung* in world history and in inter-individual interaction means that also for him the dialectic between first and second nature cannot simply be suspended at all levels.

Consequently, also in the Hegelian perspective ethical second nature and the social freedom it embodies—even though the institution of the State does ensure its stability within national borders—cannot be seen as definitively stabilized, whether at the global level or at the level of individual biography.

Individuals are not only subject to the natural violence of death but are also permanently consigned to that naturality of destiny which manifests itself both in national ethical life and in world history, and which in his writing on *Naturrecht* Hegel called the 'tragedy in ethical life [*Tragödie im Sittlichen*'] (Hegel 1975: 458–59).

But the dialectic between first and second nature has to do not only with the naturality of destiny and the violence of natural death. The tragedy of ethical life also has to do with the ossification of spirit, which is denounced as a forgetfulness of living first nature. Anticipating the reading of second nature as 'frozen spirit' developed by Lukács in *Die Theorie des Romans* (1920), Hegel refers here to the movement by which the 'inorganic nature' of natural *Sittlichkeit*—the second nature of its institutions—ossifies into something rigid and separate. Hence ethical institutions, being forgetful of the living character and of their footing in the processes of first nature, threaten social freedom and oppose, as a violent destiny which devours them, the individuals who have generated these very institutions through their ethical life.

Here, then, Hegel reveals a tragic aspect connected with the dialectic of second nature and with the very dimension of objective spirit as actualization of freedom. But it is precisely here that Hegel proves capable of not concealing from himself the intimate tension in which ethical institutions live and thus of appreciating also the potentially critical side of the dialectic of *zweite Natur*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In fact, Hegel's reflections on the tragedy in the ethical, like his successive reflections on the work of Spirit, on the alienating character of mechanized labour, and on the *Kampf um Anerkennung* between individuals and between States, reveal that the necessity with which the destiny of second nature manifests itself can be shown to be also the contingent product—because destined to pass—of a historical mediation, through which the form of natural death is detached from its dialectical relation to life and reshaped into the socially ossified form of reification.

Hence the notions of first and second nature are not just descriptive and conciliatory in Hegel but also critical, since through their dialectical interplay individual and social reality are not just exhibited in their structure but are immanently criticized as something only relatively stable.

This is what places the dialectic between first and second nature at the very heart of those forms of social pathology that Hegelian philosophy diagnoses as characteristic of the modern epoch.

Hegel's trust in the exclusive rationality of our form of life, and thus in the idea that in a rational form of life there is a virtuous circle between external and internal second nature, is what regiments this dialectic, assuring us that our ethical habits are not bad habits or—worse still—mere instincts. With the breakdown of this trust the regimentation of this dialectic has been weakened, liberating the implicit paradoxicality of second nature. Hence we come to the sarcasm of Nietzsche, who tells us it is consoling 'to know that also first nature was once a second and that victorious second nature will become a first' (Nietzsche 1966: 230), and to the bitter realization in Adorno's pronouncement that 'in truth second nature is the first' (Adorno 1997: 365). Once the living dialectic between first and second nature is repressed and suspended, second nature is subjected to the return of the dead, to its collapse into raw naturality.

The idea, already glimpsed by Hegel, that, on the one hand, first nature already has the germ of the second in itself but, on the other, second nature represents features of the first, can easily turn into the sceptical doubt that second nature and the freedom it enables might, indeed, be nothing other than dead first nature—first nature unilaterally reduced to its deadening side—masked and disguised.

IV.iv. Fragmentation and complexity of social spaces

The less radical, but not less corrosive, version of this doubt—namely, that second nature might be a fragile formation, always on the verge of falling back into the abyss of raw naturality and death—is destined to take on a new face in the post-Hegelian situation.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In fact there are growing reasons to believe that second nature, which in Gehlen's anthropology had the task of stabilizing human being *qua* unstable being, has not, in its turn, been stabilized in a vital manner. This situation may be read as a phenomenon of both the pluralization and the fragmentation of second nature.

The concept of second nature can provide an important interpretative key for a social philosophy interested in formulating an epochal diagnosis of the phenomena of disintegration—but also enlargement—of human possibilities that concern second modernity.[16]

Fragmentation appears, then, to follow two main drifts. In the first place it appears to derive from the type of relationship between individual and society that comes to be instituted in post-traditional societies that manifest a plurality of forms of ethical life. In these terms, fragmentation can be read as a positive phenomenon of social differentiation, which, by augmenting the spheres of belonging, emancipates individuals from the monistic rigidity of traditional societies, leading to an increase in the moral complexity of individual choices and thus to a pluralistic conception of practical reason and to an expansion of freedom (see Larmore 1987).

But in the process of fragmentation we can also identify a second drift, which can be read as a form of oscillatory social pathology. We have seen, in fact, how the embodiment of recognition requires a duplicating of second nature in the internal dimension of the individual and in the external dimension of social institutions, and how vital, not-stagnant stabilization depends on the cohesion and virtuous circularity of the interaction between these dimensions. But in a society of risk, where the bond between individual and society is becoming less cohesive and more exposed to a process of flexibilization, the interaction between the two dimensions is growing more precarious; or, at least, the illusory features of the belief in this stability, also with regard to previous societies, are becoming more manifest.

This can only make the instability of the acquisition of second nature more evident. Indeed, a modernity grown increasingly reflective, as Hegel feared, has growing difficulty in giving rise to habits of interaction that have the characteristics of second immediacy required for ethical vital stabilization. In this situation the social space of reason reveals its pathological fragmentation and can meet with phenomena of sudden disintegration, turning all at once into the feral and irrational space of a society of fear.

A second order of reasons is connected with the effects produced, in post-traditional societies, by the meeting of various cultural traditions, and by the idea that one's own form of life is not of itself necessarily the most accomplished. Relinquishing the idea of the uniqueness and exclusive rationality of one's own

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

form of life gives rise to a plurality of models of good life on which no final rational consensus can be established.

What is more, it has become increasingly common for the same individual—also due to a process of globalization that tends to place them within a worldwide civil society—to move in different forms of life, at different times or even simultaneously. If inhabiting the space of objective spirit means participating in a form of life, being immediately involved in a *Sittlichkeit*, then an interpretation of objective spirit in terms of second nature has to take into account the fact that second nature is subject to extremely powerful stress in today's world.

If on the one hand such phenomena of multiple belonging seem *prima facie* to emancipate individuals from overly coercive traditional identities, on the other the instability thus produced gives rise to processes that go more in the direction of regress to dead first nature than in the direction of a definitive detachment of the cultural from the animal world.

And it is basically for the same reason that the double-edged idea of first and second nature, precisely in virtue of its ambivalence,[17] today proves to be more interesting for comprehending what our social institutions and our individual destinies have become than many notions grown exclusively on the culturalist terrain of the human sciences. Likewise, a model of recognitive freedom that takes the dialectic between the two levels (first natural and second natural) of the phenomenon into consideration and realizes that their relationship is not that of an aproblematic chronological succession and substitution of the first with the second, but rather that of an often unreconciled co-presence, will have more adequate conceptual means for interpreting a historical situation in which the precariousness of human nature gives rise to phenomena of often uncontrollable pathological oscillation between the two poles.

IV.v. Coda: Hegelian social pathologies

Hegel's concept of second nature captures the intricate interplay between individual agency and the institutional structures that enable freedom. This dynamic, however, is vulnerable to stagnation and ossification, where the living, responsive quality of second nature is replaced by rigid, unreflective adherence to established norms.

Särkelä (2018) explores how stagnant, ossified second nature can limit freedom, arguing that such social rigidity results in a breakdown of social progress where ethical life is no longer responsive to individual agency.

When second nature becomes ossified, it ceases to facilitate the mutual recognition and freedom it was designed to support, leading to what Frederick Neuhouser (2022) identifies as 'Hegelian social pathology'. According to

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Neuhouser, social pathology arises when the social and institutional structures meant to enable individual flourishing instead obstruct it. Neuhouser's account draws on Hegel's notion that freedom requires alignment between subjective and objective spirit—what I have labelled as a 'virtuous circle'—such that individuals recognize themselves in the social structures that govern their lives. When ossified norms prevent this alignment, individuals experience alienation and a loss of freedom. Ossified second nature disrupts this process by rigidifying institutional norms, rendering them unresponsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of individuals.

These insights emphasize that freedom, for Hegel, is not a static achievement but an ongoing process that requires institutions to remain responsive to individual and collective transformation. To address social pathology, Neuhouser argues that institutions must preserve their capacity for self-correction, ensuring that they remain spaces where recognition and freedom can flourish. This resonates with Hegel's idea of the 'virtuous circle', a dialectical process in which subjective spirit (individual dispositions) and objective spirit (social institutions) continually shape and sustain each other. But as I argue in this paper, the critical dialectic of first and second nature is more radical than that, since it undermines the presupposition that such a virtuous circle as such is given as such. This allows us to appreciate that Hegelian social pathologies are not just institutional failures, as Neuhouser seems to assume, that is, failures of the institutions in fulfilling their roles in enabling individual freedom. The entwinement between the recognitive process and the dialectic between first and second nature leads, as I have been arguing, to the pluralization and fragmentation of second natures as something contingent and vulnerable, and to a more ambivalent and paradoxical picture of the process of recognition.

Italo Testa
Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Cultural Industries, University of Parma, Parma, Italy
italo.testa@unipr.it

Notes

This research was supported by PNRR–M4C2– I1.1 – MUR Call for proposals n. 1409 14-09-2022 - Bando PRIN 2022 PNRR - ERC sector SH5 - Project title: Transforming Habits [TRANSHAB]. Agency, Cognition, and Social Change - Project Code P2022K7B7E- CUP Code D53D23019710001- Funded by the European Union - NextGenerationEU.

1. See, for example, Pinkard (1994), Honneth (1995) and Ikäheimo and Laitinen (2011).

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2. See, for example, Pippin (2008: 202): 'Hegel's theory of recognition has turned out to be a theory of practical rationality of a radically "boot-strapping" (internally self-determining and internally self-justifying sort)'.

3. See for instance Testa (2012), on the proto-recognitive qualities of natural life, Ng (2020: 116–19) on the role of life's self-regulating dynamics in recognition; Bernstein (2015: Part 2) on bodily experience in living recognition, and Ikäheimo (2022: 100) on recognition as being rooted in the relational capacities of living beings more broadly.

4. Abbreviations used:

Enz = Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

Rph = Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

5. Scholars such as Ikäheimo (2022), making reference mostly to Hegel's mature writings, consider recognition as an inherent capacity within human relationality. This aligns with Hegel's depiction of 'doubling' in sexual differentiation I have reconstructed here and in previous works (see Testa 2009; 2010: 163–238), where an organism 'finds itself in another' as an early, intuitive form of recognition. This basic relational awareness underpins the more complex social forms of recognition Hegel explores, bridging first and second nature. I think that here the Jena writings offer the most interesting basis for justifying and developing such an understanding of the relation between first and second nature.

6. According to Ikäheimo (2022) recognition is not only a social practice but also a way of relating that structures the ethical and ontological identity of individuals. This perspective is foundational in interpreting Hegel's social freedom, as it situates freedom within relationships that are grounded in natural tendencies yet realized within complex social norms. I think that the reconstruction I provide of Hegel's Jena texts offers a background for such an interpretation. By viewing recognition as a bridge between first and second nature, Hegel's dialectic of freedom illustrates how individuals achieve social cohesion through mutual recognition, which Ikäheimo describes as 'the ontological and ethical backbone of human life-form' (2022: 18).

7. Scholars like Pinkard (1994), Pippin (2008), Honneth (2014), and Brandom (2019), provide alternative interpretations, focusing on recognition as socially constructed within institutional frameworks. Pippin, for instance, argues that Hegel's concept of recognitive freedom is constituted within social contexts, whereas Pinkard views Hegelian freedom as a historically situated construct. The reconstruction I propose here diverges by suggesting that recognition is rooted in first nature, supporting a foundation for Hegelian freedom that encompasses both natural and social dimensions.

8. On the importance, and on the ambivalence, of the theme of habit in the context of subjective spirit see Merker (1990: 227–43). For a development of the Hegelian notion of habit in terms of an anthropology of 'plasticity', see Malabou (1996) and Wake (2009: 139–51). On the relation between habit and language see Lewis (2007). For an analysis of habit in the context of Hegel's theory of perceptual content see Forman (2010). On the relevance of habit for

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Hegel's social philosophy see Novakovic (2017). On habit in Hegel's *Philosophy of right* see in particular Lumsden (2012). On the place of habit in Hegel's psychology, see Magri (2016).

9. On the theme of embodiment see Russon (1994: 14). For an analysis of embodiment and second nature in the Self-Consciousness chapter of the *Phenomenology* see Testa (2008, 2013, and 2020).

10. For a reading of first and second nature in relation to contemporary neuroscientific naturalism see Hogh and König (2011).

11. In his reading of Hegel's theory of spiritual freedom as *Befreiung*, Christoph Menke has convincingly argued that the mechanic side of Hegel's second naturalness implies a genealogical and proto-materialist criticism of the left-Hegelian and historicist interpretation of autonomy as participation in social practices developed by Pippin and Pinkard (see Menke 2010; see also Khurana 2013). For a comprehensive reconstruction of this genealogy see Ranchio (2016).

12. To this extent I agree with Joel Whitebook's Kleinean interpretation of Hegel, according to which 'Hegel and Freud—at least the Hegel of the *Phenomenology*—share a common theoretical orientation. They are, strictly speaking, neither theorists of first nature nor of second nature, but of the transition of the former into the latter' (2008: 383). According to Whitebook, Hegelian narrative and contemporary infant research begin to diverge when it comes to the analysis of mirroring and the claim that the self is *in toto* a product of mirroring (2008: 385) and would preclude the existence of a pre-reflective self. I think that the reconstruction I offer here accounts for the fact that such a Hegelian narrative, even if still hegemonic within contemporary interpretations, goes against the grain of Hegel's understanding of recognition as being rooted in the pre-reflective process of practical interaction of the natural self.

13. While interpretations such as Pippin (2008) highlight habit as stabilizing mechanism, my argument extends this by showing that habit also reinforces subjective spirit's dynamic engagement with both natural inclinations and social institutions. This underscores freedom as both structured and evolving, where habit serves as a medium connecting individual embodiment with broader social contexts.

14. Although the title announces a relevant correction of his previous perspective on Hegel's theory of sociality, Terry Pinkard's book on *Hegel's Naturalism: Mind, Nature, and the Final Ends of Life* (2012) follows on the subject matter of second nature a line complementary to Pippin's, denying the role of natural potentials (2012: 184), and absorbing the matter of second nature into a theory of individual free agency as participation in an historical *Bildung* (2012: 98–104), which leads it to miss its objective—simultaneously natural and social—side, and the dialectics it implies.

15. Jean-François Kervégan has convincingly argued that, due to this intimate tension, Hegel's position is not a version of 'strong institutionalism'—according to which, as in the bootstrapping model, the primacy of objective spirit should imply the denial of any relevant role for subjective capacities and powers—and should be better qualified as weak institutionalism (see Kervégan 2007: 310ff.).

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

16. For the use of the concept of 'disintegration' within a social philosophy that employs the post-Hegelian method of social diagnosis, see Honneth (1994).
17. For the role that ambivalence plays in Hegel's understanding of the relation between nature and society, first and second nature, in relation to the romantic tradition, as for the understanding of love and the relation between the sexes, see in particular Gregoratto (2023).

Bibliography

Adorno, T. W. (1997), 'Die Idee der Naturgeschichte', in *Gesammelte Schriften, Philosophische Frühschriften*, vol. 1, ed. R. Tiedemann. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
Bernstein, J. M. (2015), *Torture and Dignity: An Essay on Moral Injury*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Brandom, R. B. (2019), *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
Forman, D. (2010), 'Second nature and spirit: Hegel on the role of habit in the appearance of perceptual consciousness', *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 48(4): 325–52.
Gregoratto, F. (2023), 'Romances of Nature. Hegelian and Romantic Impulses for Critical Theory', *Verifiche* LII (1): 39–62.
Hegel, G. W. F. (1975), *Jenaer Systementwürfe I. Das System der spekulativen Philosophie*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, ed. K. Düsing and H. Kimmerle. Hamburg: Meiner.
Hegel, G. W. F. (1977), *Kritische Schriften*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4, ed. H. Buchner and O. Pöggeler. Hamburg: Meiner.
Hogh, P. and König, J. (2011), 'Bestimmte Unbestimmbarkeit. Über die zweite Natur in der ersten und die erste Natur in der zweiten', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 59(3): 419–38.
Honneth, A. (1994), *Desintegration. Bruchstücke einer soziologischen Zeitdiagnose*. Frankfurt: Fischer.
Honneth, A. (1995), *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit. Eine Reaktualisierung der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*. Stuttgart: Reclam.
Honneth, A. (2014), *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, trans. J. Ganahl. New York: Columbia University Press.
Ikäheimo, H. (2022), *Recognition and Human Life-form: Beyond Identity and Difference*. London: Routledge.
Ikäheimo, H. and Laitinen, A. (eds.) (2011), *Recognition and Social Ontology*. London: Brill.
Kervégan, J. -F. (2007), *L'effectif et le rationnel. Hegel et l'esprit objectif*. Paris: Vrin.
Khurana, T. (2013), 'Life and Autonomy: Forms of Self-Determination in Kant and Hegel', in T. Kuhrana (ed.), *The Freedom of Life: Hegelian Perspectives*. Berlin: August Verlag, 155–93.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Larmore, C. (1987), *Patterns of Moral Complexity*. Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press.
Lewis, T. A. (2007), 'Speaking of Habits', *The Owl of Minerva* 39(1–2): 25–53.
Lumsden, S. (2012), 'Habit, Sittlichkeit and Second Nature', *Critical Horizons* 13(2): 220–43.
Lukács, G. (1920), Die Theorie des Romans: Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der großen Epik. *Berlin: Paul Cassirer*.
Magrì, E. (2016), 'The Place of Habit in Hegel's Psychology', in S. Herrmann-Sinai and L. Ziglioli (eds.), *Hegel's Philosophical Psychology*. London and New York: Routledge, 74–90.
Malabou, C. (1996), *L'Avenir de Hegel*. Vrin: Paris.
Menke, C. (2010), 'Autonomie und Befreiung', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 58(5): 675–94.
Merker, B. (1990), 'Über Gewohnheit', in L. Eley (ed.), *Hegels Theorie des subjektiven Geistes in der 'Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse'*. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.
Neuhouser, F. (2022), *Diagnosing Social Pathology: Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Durkheim*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ng, K. (2020), *Hegel's Concept of Life: Self-Consciousness, Freedom, Logic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Nietzsche, F. (1966), *Vom Nützen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*, in *Werke*, Vol. 1, ed. K. Schlechta. Munich: Hans.
Novakovic, A. (2017). *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Pinkard, T. P. (1994), *Hegel's Phenomenology. The Sociality of Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Pinkard, T. P. (2012), *Hegel's Naturalism. Mind, Nature, and the Final Ends of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Pippin, R. B. (2008), 'Hegelian Sociality: Recognitive Status', in *Hegel's Practical Philosophy. Rational Agency as Practical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ranchio, F. (2016), *Dimensionen der zweiten Natur: Hegels praktische Philosophie*. Hamburg: Meiner.
Rath, N. (1996), *Zweite Natur: Konzepte einer Vermittlung von Natur und Kultur in Antropologie undAesthetik um 1800*. Muenster: Waxmann.
Russon, J. (1994), *The Self and Its Body in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Särkelä, A. (2018), *Immanente Kritik und soziales Leben. Selbsttransformative Praxis nach Hegel und Dewey*. Frankfurt: Klostermann.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Testa, I. (2008), 'Selbstbewußtsein und zweite Natur', in K. Vieweg and W. Welsch (eds.), *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes: Ein kooperativer Kommentar zu einem Schlüsselwerk der Moderne*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 286–307.
Testa, I. (2009), 'Second Nature and Recognition: Hegel and the Social Space', *Critical Horizons* 10(3): 341–70.
Testa, I. (2012), 'How Does Recognition Emerge from Nature? The Genesis of Consciousness in Hegel's Jena Writings', *Critical Horizons* 13(2): 176–96.
Testa, I. (2013), 'Hegel's Naturalism or Soul and Body in the Encyclopedia', in D. S. Stern (ed.), *Essays on Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 19–35.
Testa, I. (2020), 'Embodied Cognition, Habit, and Natural Agency in Hegel's Anthropology', in M. F. Bykova and K. R. Westphal (eds.), *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 269–95.
Wake, P. (2009), 'Nature as Second Nature: Plasticity and Habit', in M. J. Cherry (ed.). *The Normativity of the Natural*. Dordrecht: Springer.
Whitebook, J. (2008), 'First Nature and Second Nature in Hegel and Psychoanalisis', *Constellations* 15(3): 382–89.

https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2026.10097 Published online by Cambridge University Press