

# Chapter 18

## Race, Feminism and Critical Race Theories: What's Hegel Got to Do with It?



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Contemporary feminist scholarship has interestingly highlighted the relevance of Hegel's philosophy for feminist theory and politics.<sup>1</sup> Against readings traditionally emphasizing Hegel's misogyny and his patriarchal understanding of the relationship between the sexes, which associates the feminine with nature and relegates women to an inferior status,<sup>2</sup> recent feminist interpretations have stressed the multiple perspectives disclosed by Hegel for "think[ing] differently about the meanings and implications of categories such as sex and gender," as suggested by Kimberly Hutchings.<sup>3</sup>

In the fields of postcolonial and decolonial studies, critical race theory, and critical philosophy of race, Hegel's works have not encountered a similar reception. Most of the contributions from these fields have, instead, polemically engaged with the Hegelian corpus, with the purpose of elucidating the crucial role played by Hegel's philosophy in the conceptualization of racial hierarchies and colonial Eurocentrism that underlie the master narrative of Western modernity.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the challenge of recovering Hegel's conceptions of race, slavery, and colonialism—namely his hierarchical classification of races, justification of slavery, and endorsement of colonialism—seems to be a both hopeless and useless task.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the present chapter will not embark on such a controversial undertaking. Rather, it will draw on contemporary feminist approaches to Hegel with the aim of examining the extent to which feminist interpretations of Hegelian philosophy may encourage *thinking differently about the meanings and implications of the category of race*—to paraphrase Hutchings—and supplement recent scholarly debates on racial relations and racial justice.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the chapter is thus twofold. On the one hand, it seeks to shed light on Hegel's understanding of race(s) across his works

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and to provide a critical overview of the literature on the topic. On the other hand, it looks at recent feminist readings of Hegel to investigate whether they could outline textual and conceptual strategies for engaging with Hegel's discourse on race(s) so as to make his contribution valuable for contemporary critical philosophies of race and antiracist theories and practices.

## 1 Hegel on Race(s)

Over the last two decades, the *vexata quaestio* of "Hegel and race" has been largely investigated both within and outside the field of Hegel scholarship.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, the very texts under scrutiny to illuminate Hegel's treatise of race(s) have produced conflicting assessments of the matter and, indeed, the supposedly contradicting statements that appear in Hegel's writings account for the differing interpretations that have been offered of his discourse on race(s).

The much commented §§391–393 of the *Encyclopaedia's* "Anthropology" provide a remarkable example of the ambivalences of Hegel's text (HW 10: 51–63). Here, Hegel begins by exposing the notion of the "natural soul" [*die natürliche Seele*] endowed with its natural qualities [*natürliche Qualitäten*] and determinacies [*Naturbestimmtheiten*] (HW 10: 51). While illustrating the particularization of the "universal planetary life" of spirit into multiple and geographically distinct "particular natural spirits" [*in die besonderen Naturgeister*], Hegel introduces the notion of *racial variety* [*Rassenverschiedenheit*], pinpointing the physical and spiritual differences existing within the human species (HW 10: 57). Then in the addition to §393, Hegel remarks: "With regard to the racial variety of mankind, it must be noticed first of all that the purely historical question as to whether or not all human races have descended from *one* couple or from several, is of no concern whatever to us in philosophy" (HW 10: 57). In Hegel's view, the belief that "human beings are by nature so diverse in their spiritual capabilities that some may be dominated like animals" is philosophically unfounded as "no ground for the entitlement or non-entitlement of human beings to freedom and to dominion can be derived from descent" (HW 10: 57). Most importantly, Hegel stresses that "[m]an is implicitly rational; herein lies the possibility of equality of right for all men, [and] the nullity of a rigid distinction between human races [*Menschengattungen*] that have rights and those that have none" (HW 10: 57–58). However, he also highlights "the difference between the human races" and describes it as a "natural difference" resulting from the particularity of each natural soul and from the distinctive character of their geographical location. On this ground, Hegel thus proceeds to the description of the physiognomy of *races* (*Caucasians, Mongolians, Ethiopians, Malayans, and Americans*) and to their hierarchical classification—the highest and noblest *race* being the Caucasian, in which spirit "first attains to absolute unity with itself" and for "the first time enters into complete opposition to naturalness, apprehends itself in its absolute independence, ... achieves self-determination, self-development, and thereby brings forth World History" (HW 10: 59–62).

The *Encyclopaedia's* "Anthropology," from which the above quotes are taken, constitutes the first part of Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit. The philosophy of subjective spirit, in turn, is one of the main components of Hegel's discourse on race(s), together with his philosophy of history and his philosophy of right.<sup>8</sup> Since Hegel exposes his understanding of race(s) across these three main branches of his philosophy, one can legitimately doubt that his scattered remarks across the system would allow us to speak of a "racial theory" proper. Nonetheless, the three philosophical areas where Hegel locates his discourse on race(s) reveal its strategic relevance: the notion of race (*Rasse* or at times *Geschlecht*<sup>9</sup>) is a distinctive marker in the anthropological transition from nature to spirit, as much as it plays a fundamental role in Hegel's theory of the relations between nations/peoples or world-historical realms,<sup>10</sup> and in Hegel's conception of freedom and power in the teleological geography of his World History.<sup>11</sup>

If the term "racial theory" suggests a systematic approach to the matter that is indeed not to be found in Hegel, one can still claim that Hegelian philosophy relies on a specific *racial construct* that emerges at the intersection of three different layers: namely, Hegel's anthropology, which articulates the natural (racial) differences among the human species; the geography of the *Weltgeschichte*, or rather its *geographical foundation* [*geographische Grundlage*], recounted in the *Philosophy of History* through the prisms of the continents and their respective topographies (HW 12: 105–107); and, lastly, the *history of Spirit* in which Hegel's ethical life culminates and where the "spirits of nations [*Völkergeister*] in their multicolored actuality" progressively give life to a series of historical realms (HW 7: 503–512). Hegel's discourse on race(s) appears to be composed of a long chain of correspondences the philosopher establishes between racial differences, ethical dispositions, geographical locations, national characters (as pertaining to determinate peoples), and spiritual outcomes in the World History. This racial construct operates by mobilizing the notion of race and theorizing racial diversity, by connecting racial diversity to geography (the continents and their climatic conditions), by associating peoples/nations (*Völker*) in their "*geographical and anthropological existence*" to "immediate natural principles" that determine their physical and spiritual traits (HW 7: 505), and by classifying these traits in a hierarchical order so as to assign to each people a civilizational achievement in the *Weltgeschichte* with the sole exception of the *racés* excluded from history: the *Negroes* and the *Americans*.<sup>12</sup>

Following the pattern of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's classification,<sup>13</sup> Hegel's anthropology includes three main *racés* ("Caucasian", "Ethiopian," and "Mongolian") and two minor varieties ("Malaysian" and "American"), that the philosopher takes care to distinguish both physically and spiritually. As mentioned earlier, according to Hegel only the *Caucasian race* has reached "absolute unity with itself," while the *Asiatic race* (*Mongolians*) merely incarnates "the spirit [that] is certainly already beginning to awake and to separate itself from naturalness" (HW 10: 61). Inoffensive *Negroes* (*Ethiopians*), instead, live in a state of childish immediacy: "immersed in their uninterested and indifferent naivete [...] they are sold, and let themselves be sold, without any reflection on whether this is right or not" (HW 10: 59). They cannot be said to be lacking a "capacity for education," although

Hegel remarks that they show no “inner impulse towards culture [... and] do not attain to the feeling of man’s personality” (HW 10: 60).

Additionally, the geography of Hegel’s World History distinguishes the New World (the Americas) from the Old one, namely Asia and Europe—Africa being the paradigmatic “unhistorical continent” [*kein geschichtlicher Weltteil*] (HW 12: 129)—and stages a strong causal correlation between natural elements, including geology and climate, and the ethical characters of the peoples (HW 12: 107–132). Lastly, Hegel’s *Weltgeschichte*, extensively exposed in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* and synthetically summarized in the *Philosophy of Right*, portrays the parade of the spirit across four world-historical realms: the Oriental (comprising China, India, Persia, and Egypt), the Greek, the Roman, and the Germanic. The trajectory of World History, which, according to Hegel, “has arisen [*aufgegangen*] in the southeast, and ... subsided [*niedergegangen*] into itself to the northwest,”<sup>14</sup> resonates with the racial progression described in the *Encyclopaedia* although there is no complete overlap between, on the one hand, the racial dimension grounded in nature and, on the other hand, the world-historical dimension, which is primarily spiritual.<sup>15</sup> The problem indeed resides in the ethico-political implications of Hegel’s anthropology—an anthropology rooted in the hierarchical dichotomy of nature and spirit—for his conceptualization of the history of the Spirit. In Hegel’s anthropological account of racial varieties and in his teleology of history, such a foundational dichotomy translates into the exclusive assignation of the *Caucasian race* to the domain of the spirit and the consignment of the *other races*, to different degrees, to the stigma of naturality.

Contradictorily—or at least seemingly so—Hegel in the *Encyclopaedia* proclaims the spiritual equality of all human beings premised on their rationality, while at the same time elaborating on the natural differences among the *races*. In his view, while the development of the spirit towards the actualization of its freedom is a historical necessity as much as the perfectibility and the education of the human race (HW 7: 504), the spiritual advancement of *some races* and/or *Völker/nations* appears to be impossible, as it is impeded by natural constraints (HW 10: 63–70). Shall thus one conclude that according to Hegel these *races* and/or peoples are ultimately non perfectible, hence not fully human, and, therefore, destined to a murderous long-lasting history of domination? Or shall one play Hegel’s thoughts against each other, namely his philosophy of universal freedom against his history of universal domination, to attempt at subverting the most shameful assumptions of his system?

## 2 Hegel and Racism

Given the contradictory nature of his claims—about the human impulse to freedom *and* the necessity of slavery (“The only significant relationship that Negroes had with Europeans” (HW 12: 128)); about racial hierarchies *and* racial equality; about

the incessant advancement of the *Geist* and the natural limits to spiritual progress—interpreters have offered quite opposite readings of Hegel's discourse on race(s). A major issue of contention is whether Hegelian philosophy is intrinsically racist or rather at odds with the outrageous racist statements that it nevertheless contains. In other words, to what extent can Hegel's dialectic of freedom be dissociated from his colonialist and racist views and eventually employed against the latter?<sup>16</sup> And, finally, is Hegel's discourse on race(s) contradictory or rather profoundly consistent *qua* the philosophical master narrative of Western modernity that non-contradictorily (and in fact instrumentally) celebrates freedom in Europe *vis-à-vis* the unfreedom to which the rest of the world is doomed?<sup>17</sup>

In his 2019 article on “The Dark Side of Hegel's Theory of Modernity: Race and The Other,” Jong-Seok Na suggests considering three main orientations among the multiple responses that have been provided from different scholarly perspectives to the questions mentioned above. The first one reflects the dominant approach in Hegelian scholarship that deems Hegel's philosophy as not inherently racist and tends to minimize Hegel's prejudices as merely echoing the philosophical *air du temps* of his age.<sup>18</sup> According to Stephen Houlgate, “Hegel does not give particular priority to racial differences between people because, in his view, human self-consciousness is what determines a civilization's character, and this self-consciousness can be changed and developed through education.”<sup>19</sup> For Terry Pinkard, Hegel “rejected all doctrines of racial superiority flowing around Europe at the time.”<sup>20</sup> In Sandra Bonetto's view, Hegel centers his reflections on “the historical significance of peoples” and their national character, rather than on *races*. To that extent, for Bonetto, Hegel's concept of race(s) fulfills the purpose of distinguishing and classifying human populations, but it does not imply any immediate causal relationship between biological and cultural attributes pertaining to individuals. In the end, according to Bonetto, Hegel's *Weltgeschichte* is “essentially the product of human thoughts and deeds, not of nature, and hence not of race” and “there is no ‘iron law of race’ that determines cultural and spiritual progress as far as Hegel is concerned.”<sup>21</sup> From this perspective, the fact that Africa has been located by Hegel on the threshold of World History [*an der Schwelle der Weltgeschichte*] (HW 12: 129), and that for Hegel Africans still imprisoned in nature “have *not yet* attained the distinction between themselves as individuals and their essential universality” does not entail that African consciousness is forever condemned to inferiority (HW 12: 122);<sup>22</sup> Africans are simply contingently backward in comparison to other peoples with regards to spiritual world progress. In conclusion, Bonetto affirms that “[e]ven if we accuse Hegel of Eurocentrism, this does not amount to racism because racism would imply that Hegel had causally grounded the primacy he assigns to Europe on firm biological and genetical foundations.”<sup>23</sup> *Pace* Bonetto, however, to state that Hegel's *Weltgeschichte* is *just* a form of ethnocentrism coupled with *mere* Eurocentrism and to maintain that Hegel was *only* a geocultural racist rather than a scientific one, does not undermine—and actually strengthens—the claim that Hegelian philosophy must be recognized as one of the pillars in the edifice of modern/colonial racial thinking.<sup>24</sup>

A different and a more nuanced assessment recognizes Hegel's racist and pro-colonial views, but maintains that they do not affect the entirety of his philosophy of spirit. For Joseph McCarney, Hegel's conception of history as "the escape of spirit from nature, [and] its overcoming of all natural determinants such as common descent or blood relationship" proves that, in spite of Hegel's racist assumptions, "a firmer theoretical basis for the fundamental equality of human beings than Hegelian spirit provides can scarcely be conceived."<sup>25</sup> According to Darrel Moellendorf, Hegel's philosophy of spirit is tainted with racial views that are "decidedly racist." However, Moellendorf also argues that the "[p]hilosophy of spirit is not necessarily racist, only contingently so" and that "racism does not follow from any of his fundamental claims about spirit."<sup>26</sup> Moellendorf thus concludes that "Hegel's racism is not contradictory to his more general theoretical views, nor does it follow necessarily from them, rather it is compatible with it."<sup>27</sup>

For Alison Stone, Hegel's dialectic presupposes a "sharp division of European freedom from non-European unfreedom" that is premised on the very dialectical distinction of freedom *an sich* and *für sich*, the latter identified with consciously actualized freedom. It is not surprising, according to Stone, that for Hegel all humans *are free* while some have to *become free*, as this is where the Hegelian dialectic of history is entrenched with his dialectic of nature: in other words, if all humans are naturally and *an sich* free, not all humans can be historically conceived as *für sich* free.<sup>28</sup> This distinction, which leads Hegel to rank peoples and civilizations based on their levels of consciousness of freedom, also allows him to grant non-European peoples the possibility of achieving universal freedom. In that sense, in Stone's view, Hegel's account of freedom can be separated from his actual pro-colonialism, although the disentanglement is not too easy "because Hegel's conception of freedom as self-determination has significant connections with his Eurocentrism," and Hegel's philosophy in general "contains anti-colonial possibilities as well as the pro-colonial possibilities."<sup>29</sup>

A third group of radical critics of Hegel's racial discourse refuses to consider Hegel's racism as accidental and as not inherently part of his philosophical edifice, arguing that Hegelian racism and his philosophy are inextricably entwined. For authors such as Robert Bernasconi, even if Hegel's philosophy of history does not immediately rely on racial basis, Hegel "uses race as a category to exclude all but Caucasians from being historical subjects in the full sense."<sup>30</sup> To that extent, Hegel "had failed to provide an answer to Kant's question of why the Laplanders or Tahitians bothered to exist."<sup>31</sup> Against McCarney's definition of Hegel as a geographical materialist, Bernasconi states that Hegel can be better qualified as a "geographical determinist" who was in the end "a *precursor* of the mid-nineteenth-century tendency to construct philosophies of history organized around the concept of race, such as we find in Robert Knox and Gobineau."<sup>32</sup> Even more polemically, Teshale Tibebu speaks of Hegel as "the patrolman of racial profiling" standing "on the turnpike of Western modernity."<sup>33</sup> Tibebu observes that by assigning Africans and Native Americans the lowest ranks of mankind, Hegel expresses all his "scorn for non-Western humanity" so that his philosophy completely "fails to be a philosophy of genuine humanism or of concrete universalism."<sup>34</sup> In other words, while theorizing



“true universalism (a principle of universal freedom) against abstract one-sidedness,” Hegel ends up elaborating his conception of World History on “universal eurocentrism.”<sup>35</sup> Such pitiless analysis seems to leave no hope and no room for rethinking Hegelian philosophy from the perspective of a critical philosophy of race. How could a system premised on “paradigmatic apartheid” be of any help for combating racial prejudices in theory and racial injustices in practice?<sup>36</sup> Looking at some meaningful feminist engagements with Hegel, the following sections will explore the viability of the strategies that have been employed in recent feminist scholarship for dealing with the *letter* and the *spirit* of Hegelian philosophy.

### 3 Feminist Readings of Hegel, Gender, and Race

Comparing and combining feminist readings of Hegel's conceptualization of women, femininity, and gender roles with Hegel's conceptualization of race(s) seems an odd path to pursue, as gender and race, generally speaking, are not twin concepts, nor are they symmetric or equivalent in the Hegelian corpus. However, this section will specifically focus on the arguments developed by contemporary feminist readers of Hegel about the insights that, against the background of its dialectic of nature and spirit, Hegelian philosophy has provided for rethinking freedom and emancipation.

If gender and race are not equivalent nor symmetric concepts in Hegel's terms, they still display some significant similarities. In the Hegelian human hierarchy, both women and racialized peoples (meaning “non-Caucasians”) are deemed inferior beings, whose inferiority relies on their assignation to nature.<sup>37</sup> In Hegel's philosophy, *people of nature* (including women and non-Western peoples) remain opposed to *people of spirit* (Caucasian men), and culture and education [*Bildung*] do not have the same impact on them.<sup>38</sup> Some distinctions, however, can be traced also among *people of nature*. Women cannot be educated nor recognized, as there is no *Kampf um Anerkennung* for them to fight. Non-Western peoples, instead, may be “educated”—enslavement is for Hegel a path to education among others and actually the best suited for the non-Caucasians—but they can in no way achieve the stage of ethical life.<sup>39</sup> *Racial difference* and *sexual difference*, so to say, do not meet the same fate in the Hegelian system and in the development of modern ethical life.

According to the *Philosophy of Right*, women are portrayed as naturally passive beings who are incapable of political emancipation and can only fulfill their mission within the limited sphere of the family, being denied the possibility of access to civil society as accomplished individuals. In spite of their naturalistic characterization, however, the ethical role of women in the *Sittlichkeit* is not defined upon biological reductionism and there is no account in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* of the biological category of sex.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Hegel describes the physical category of race—the “immediate soul” enmeshed in its “natural mode”—as determined by geographical and material conditions and as having a crucial spiritual significance.<sup>41</sup> Yet, if no perspective of improvement is envisioned for women with regards to the

position they occupy in society, non-Western peoples—“culturally inferior nations”—are in principle intended to progress on their way to freedom, patiently learning from the West: as Hegel puts it, they are meant to be “gradually eroded through contact with more advanced nations which have gone through a more intensive cultural development”.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, such an idea of freedom seems to be contradicted by the fixed assignation of *people of nature* to the lowest stages of development, which does not translate into a full equalization of human beings in the course of the *Weltgeschichte*: its highest peak, the Germanic world, where *all humans are free*, as Hegel said, still entails a great amount of unfreedom for a huge portion of mankind. On the other hand, in the landscape of Hegel’s ethical life, women are manifestly inferior but necessary to the preservation and reproduction of the family and are to that extent unreplaceable. As Patricia J. Mills has observed, “Hegel believes nature has assigned woman to the family, the sphere of first nature, and he keeps her imprisoned there on nature’s behalf. Whereas man finds a self-conscious reality or second nature in community, woman remains in the sphere of immediate biological life.”<sup>43</sup> For Mills, at the same time, Hegel recognizes the necessity of “the sphere of undifferentiated universality or immediacy” whereby “modern woman is forced to do the family ‘maintenance work’ required by the Hegelian dialectic [...and] woman is kept at home in the name of love to create and preserve the family.”<sup>44</sup> Non-Caucasian *races*, instead, despite being the necessary expression of the lowest stages of the rationality of the *Geist*, are considered unproductive and redundant. For example, “[t]he Mongols ..., as Hegel states, are characterized by an outward-storming activity of a flood, that dies away as quickly as it came, acts only destructively, constructs nothing, and *brings no progress in World History*” (HW 10: 61). As has been noted, “[f]or Hegel, even the massacre against American Indians after their encounter with Europeans, which drove the inhabitants to the verge of extinction, resulted from *the uncivilized state of indigenous communities*,” which he conceives of as “a vanishing, feeble breed” (HW 10: 63).<sup>45</sup>

Another much neglected aspect, which does not allow any simplistic symmetrical reading of race and gender in Hegel, touches upon the racialization of women: who are the women that Hegel has in mind when defining the essence and role of the feminine in his outline of the *Sittlichkeit*? Certainly, Hegel is referring to Caucasian women: not only does Antigone, the (Western) woman *par excellence*, spring from the Greek world, but also the woman as such is for Hegel a pillar of the family within the ethical life of the State—and non-Caucasians, we learn from Hegel, do not have a proper ethical life. Conversely, when Hegel speaks of *Negro Slaves*, the *Indians*, or the *Mongolians*, women are simply absent from the picture. Paraphrasing the title of a famous collection of writings by feminists of color from the Eighties—the anthology *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave*<sup>46</sup>—one could remark that in Hegel’s philosophy *all women are white, all the blacks are men and women of color do not exist*. Surprisingly, though, feminist scholarship engaging with Hegel has hardly questioned the implicit racial dimension underlying his understanding of women.



The interest of feminist philosophy in Hegel's work has a long tradition, starting with Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray revisiting the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in *The Second Sex* and in *Speculum*, respectively.<sup>47</sup> Feminist readings of Hegel have from the outset produced quite polarized outcomes. On the one hand, feminist theorists have denounced Hegel's conservatism and countered his naturalistic and reductionist inferiorization of women that relegates them to family life.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, feminist philosophers have also made the case that while connecting the feminine to nature and confining it to the private sphere of the family, Hegel's philosophy still offers quite solid grounds for envisioning women's emancipation from natural limitations.<sup>49</sup>

Patricia J. Mills's anthology *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel* (1996) proposes a rich overview of feminist engagements with Hegel across the twentieth century, including contributions by authors such as Carla Lonzi, Carole Pateman, and Seyla Benhabib. Mills claims that "Hegel's philosophy is significant because the Hegelian problem of the relation between identity and difference that is central to his phenomenology is at the heart of the feminist project to create a free and equal society."<sup>50</sup> For Mills, indeed, in spite of its contingently anti-feminist views, Hegel's philosophy resonates with "the fundamental problem of contemporary society with which feminists are concerned."<sup>51</sup> In her famous essay "On Hegel, Women and Irony," Benhabib argues, that Hegel's Antigone designates "the grave of utopian, revolutionary thinking about gender relations" by incarnating "the irony of the dialectic": that which the system constantly aims at expelling and that which it—ironically—can never fully remove. Hence, the task that Benhabib assigns to the feminist readers of Hegel which consists in "restor[ing] irony to the dialectic, by deflating the pompous march of historical necessity . . . by giving back to the victims of the dialectic . . . their otherness [and . . .] their selfhood."<sup>52</sup>

While Antigone has traditionally been the privileged locus of feminist engagements with Hegel's conception of women, the feminine and gender roles, *beyond Antigone* stands the volume edited by K. Hutchings and T. Pulkkinen and indeed entitled *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought: Beyond Antigone?* The volume collects feminist interpretations of both Hegel's views on gender and Hegel's philosophy at large. Interestingly, Tina Chanter's contribution to the book—"Antigone's Liminality: Hegel's Racial Purification of Tragedy and the Naturalization of Slavery"—later expanded in her *Whose Antigone? The Tragic Marginalization of Slavery*—highlights that feminist readings seem to have paid little or no attention to race and class when reflecting on gender relations in the context of Hegel's ethical life.<sup>53</sup> Antigone thus becomes for Chanter a very paradigmatic figure in the Hegelian corpus. A troubling character of the ancient *Sittlichkeit*, Antigone is not only a woman who defies the laws of the *polis* in the name of the family, but also a woman who "lays claim to her status as royalty, and . . . attempts to distinguish herself from a slave, from someone who has no authority to speak or do things for herself, in her own name."<sup>54</sup> Therefore, in Chanter's view, by reclaiming her own rights against the slaves who have no rights, Antigone's performance stands for "the eurocentrism and colonialism inherent in the Western political and philosophical tradition."<sup>55</sup> Unlike the slave, Antigone is indeed allowed to speak both in Sophocles's tragedy and in

Hegel's *Phenomenology*; as such, Chanter contends, the Greek heroine epitomizes the quintessential contempt of Western civilization for all its others. Yet, Chanter's remark, seems to rely on the conflation of the ancient and modern worlds as much as on recurrent equating of ancient slavery and the modern transatlantic slave trade. Her reading of Sophocles' tragedy goes too far when projecting onto Antigone Hegel's Eurocentric and colonial standpoint, yet her fundamental concern clearly hits the mark: Why have feminist interpreters shown no interest in interrogating the racial hierarchy underlying Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* and *Weltgeschichte*? Why have the colonial assumptions of Hegelian philosophy gone unnoticed in feminist readings of Hegel?

Significantly, the well-known *topos* of the so-called master and slave dialectic has not failed to attract the attention of feminist readers of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. If De Beauvoir famously suggested that the master and slave dialectic could have actually been applied to the relation between the sexes, where the male consciousness of the master stands for spirit and the female consciousness of the slave identifies with life, Mills has argued that woman's condition in Hegel's philosophy is to be considered worse than slavery, since the Hegelian slave can eventually become a true free subject through labor, while the Hegelian woman is nothing but a sacrificial "victim of the dialectic" whose subjugation allows for the development of civil society and modern ethical life.<sup>56</sup> In both Mills and De Beauvoir, however, the slave only functions as a phenomenological figuration of the dominated, to which the woman is either associated or opposed. Fanon's effort to racialize the master and slave dialectic in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), a reading almost contemporary with the interpretation of Hegel elaborated by De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949), has not influenced nor interested later feminist engagements with the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This testifies, once again, to the compartmentalized and one-sided approach of most feminist scholarship on Hegel, focusing on "feminist issues" narrowly conceived as "white women's issues" only.

What remains to be explored is whether such feminist works, in spite of their somehow limited perspectives, can still provide fruitful insights for envisioning possible textual and conceptual strategies to be employed when engaging with Hegel's discourse on race(s) or with his racist thought from the standpoint of a critical philosophy of race.

#### **4 Alison Stone and Kimberly Hutchings: Reinterpreting Hegel, Rethinking Feminism**

In her "Feminist Criticisms and Reinterpretations of Hegel" (2002), Alison Stone provides an interesting summary of the various and distinct approaches that feminist scholars have been adopting with regards to Hegelian philosophy. According to Stone, her summary is meant to identify different styles of feminist engagement with the history of philosophy by showing the virtues and limitations of each. The

first approach, which Stone qualifies as *extensionist*, is one that relies on concepts and theories that do not specifically focus on issues of gender and sexuality and that mobilize such conceptual resources to understand patriarchy and the social condition of women. *The Second Sex* is a paradigmatic example of such an approach, as it draws on Hegel's struggle for recognition, through the mediation of Kojève's famous reinterpretation of the master and slave dialectic, to elaborate a conceptual pattern for grasping and articulating women's oppression. The main weakness of extensionism, according to Stone, resides in its "failure to question whether the concepts and theories being extended are (in some sense) 'masculinist' in the first place."<sup>57</sup>

The second, *critical*, approach pinpointed by Stone can be considered as a reaction to the extensionist one, insofar as it embraces a negative and polemic attitude *vis-à-vis* the patriarchal and virilist values lying at the core of Hegelian philosophy. Stone highlights that "[w]hereas extensionism wrongly saw philosophy as gender-neutral, critical feminism sees it as much more uniformly and univocally masculinist than it really is."<sup>58</sup>

The third approach is the *essentialist* one, identified with Luce Irigaray's effort at revalorizing the "symbolically feminine" that emerges in Hegel's texts against the background of the all-encompassing phallogocentric framework of the Hegelian dialectic. Unlike extensionist interpretations, essentialist engagements with Hegel do not seek gender-neutral conceptual resources that would enable the reversal of the traditional hierarchy of the sexes; instead, they aim "to generate philosophical theories which refuse hierarchization by giving femininity equal value and importance alongside masculinity and by emphasizing the interdependence of feminine and masculine terms."<sup>59</sup> This is precisely what Irigaray's hermeneutics does to Hegel's thought by positively revisiting his conceptualization of the feminine simultaneously associated, on the one hand, with the body and the element of natural desire, and, on the other hand, with the private and intimate sphere of the family, a crucial and necessary institution for the accomplishment of the modern *Sittlichkeit*.

While essentialist approaches fully embrace the Hegelian identification of the feminine with body, matter, and nature and aim at transfiguring it symbolically, *deconstructive* approaches, the last and fourth strand identified by Stone, develop an opposite textual strategy that refuses any fixed symbolic content and affirms the fundamental instability and fluidity of gendered configurations. Reading Hegel's criticism of Kant's transcendental dualism from a deconstructive perspective, Judith Butler rejects any *a priori* definition of sex and gender as unalterable and claims Hegel, for whom the Kantian thing-in-itself is nothing but a residuum of metaphysical abstraction, as an ally against essentialism.

Stone, in the end, situates her interpretation of Hegel along the lines of Irigaray's essentialist stance. She thus defends the option of valuing symbolic femininity with the purpose of elaborating positive feminist theories aimed at reversing the existing hierarchy of the sexes.<sup>60</sup> Elsewhere, while engaging with his philosophy of nature, where she finds the grounds of Hegel's construct of the feminine as rooted in female sexuality, Stone argues that the Hegelian

understanding of gender relies on his dialectic distinction of concept and matter, sexually recoded as male and female.<sup>61</sup>

A radically opposite anti-essentialist stance has been embraced by Kimberly Hutchings in her *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy* (2003), where the author retraces the legacy of Hegel across a wide constellation of feminist thinkers, including some of those examined by Stone in her summary, such as once again De Beauvoir, Irigaray, and Butler, among others. Hutchings's reading of Hegel does not simply focus on his conception of sexual difference and on his portrait of women, but also deals with his philosophy at large to seek for valuable conceptual insights that Hegel may offer to different contemporary feminist theories for rethinking ontology and epistemology, ethics, and politics.

For Hutchings, Hegel is a fierce opponent of essentialism and binarism, and to that extent his philosophy may function as an antidote against feminist drifts towards binary thinking and "the temptation of transcendence." As binary thinking and the search for radical otherness haunt the genealogy of feminist theory and politics, both advocating for the rejection of dualisms and yet often lapsing back into reversed gendered binarism, Hegel's dialectic offers an alternative way to conceive of the relation of identity and difference as dynamic co-dependency. In Hutchings' view, Hegel's ontology can be foundational of a feminist epistemology that could finally and resolutely refuse the one-sidedness of dualistic approaches. On the one hand, Hegel's phenomenology may help with rethinking feminist knowledge as rooted into multiple identities, multifaceted experiences, and intersubjectivity; on the other hand, Hegel's thought provides feminist ethics and politics with crucial tools to resist the allegedly forced choice between relativism and abstract universalism, in theory and practice. Feminists, for this purpose, can learn the lessons of Hegel's "Absolute Knowing," an *absolute* that is fundamentally *historical* and whose being and truth cannot be abstracted from history. On such grounds, no absolute feminist normativity is conceivable, and feminist truths, which indeed can still be claimed and fought for, need to be measured against the background of the context from which they emerge. Prescriptions and rejections are still admitted as far as they emerge through a process of immanent critique of the status quo rather than appealing to *a priori* and unchanging ahistorical values. Hegel's philosophy, in other words, grants feminists the right to judgement and critique while preserving them from the danger of all-too-easy abstract generalizations, since no truth claim can be considered intrinsically and eternally true. Additionally, for Hutchings, Hegelian philosophy is an ally to feminist thought for one more good reason, as it allows feminists to oppose radical constructivism, on the one hand, and take sexual difference seriously, on the other hand, without necessarily essentializing it.<sup>62</sup> In the end, the cross-fertilization of Hegel's conceptuality across feminist theories proposed by Hutchings stands for a *Hegelian feminism* "fundamentally pragmatic and political" that aims at navigating and superseding entrenched debates on gendered constructions, sexual difference, women's rights, feminist ethics, politics, and representation.<sup>63</sup> Can a similar path be undertaken for imagining a *Hegelian critical philosophy of race*?

## 5 Critical Philosophy of Race and Racial Justice: What's Hegel Got to Do with It?

The feminist approaches reconstructed thus far provide a good number of references for discussing possible options to engage with Hegel's philosophy from the perspective of a critical philosophy of race. Drawing on anticolonial writings and postcolonial and decolonial theories, critical philosophy of race focuses on how race is historically constructed and how it operates in cultures, societies, and scholarship, as well as on the multiple uses and effects of race in theory and practice, including race's intersection with class and gender. A pioneer of critical philosophy of race, Charles Mills acknowledges the debt that his *racial contract*—a contract among whites established to subordinate people of color<sup>64</sup>—owes to Carole Pateman's *sexual contract*. Pateman's book, Mills states, “had been an eye-opener . . . , showing how gender could be theorized within a modified contractarian framework” and suggesting to him that race may be similarly approached.<sup>65</sup>

If the analogy of race and gender proved to be fruitful for Mills to conceive the *racial contract* along the lines of the *sexual contract*, it seems much harder to draw analogies between the hermeneutical options developed by feminist Hegelian interpreters and the ones pursued by critical philosophers of race and decolonial/postcolonial scholars engaging with Hegel. Much of the difficulty results, as said earlier, from the impossibility of simply considering gender and race as equivalent concepts occupying the same function and operating the same way in Hegel's corpus. Undoubtedly, feminist scholarship cannot be accused of confounding the two categories; rather it can be blamed for having unilaterally focused on Hegel's treatise of women and theory of the feminine without problematizing the racial and colonial assumptions of his conception of freedom, history, and ethical life.

Curiously enough, the concluding chapter of *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought*, where the editors Kimberly Hutchings and Tuija Pulkkinen engage in “Debating Hegel's Legacy for Contemporary Feminist Politics” with Nancy Bauer and Alison Stone, ends with a crucial question that remains inevitably unanswered. The question raised by Hutchings in her final words targets a major issue that feminist scholars have not been particularly interested in addressing: “What do we do about his [Hegel's] philosophy of history?”<sup>66</sup>

It is striking that feminist interpreters of Hegel who deeply investigated the significance of Hegel's legacy for contemporary feminist politics, carefully distinguishing the philosophical relevance of Hegel's philosophy from the political relevance of his political theory, have never seriously interrogated nor challenged the foundations of Hegel's philosophy of history, which implicates and articulates the systems of domination in which non-Western women—a ghostly absence in Hegel's writings—are inscribed. From the standpoint of a critical philosophy of race, the problem raised by Hutchings—what do we do with Hegel's philosophy of history?—significantly conditions all the responses that can be offered to the question of how to identify the political significance of Hegel's works for a contemporary critical reflection on race. Indeed, this depends as much on what can be done

with his philosophy of history as it does on what can be done with his conception of race(s).

Alison Stone's brilliant piece on "Hegel and colonialism" (2020), which investigates the degree of (in)extricability between Hegel's account of freedom and his Eurocentric and pro-colonialist prejudices, tackles the very core of Hegel's philosophy of history without specifically thematizing Hegel's construct of race. The paper argues that Hegel's conception of freedom cannot be easily separated from his Eurocentrism, since "the Europe/non-Europe divide is not arbitrary but has a philosophical rationale" in the Hegelian system, insofar as Hegel identifies "Greek and post-Greek European views as views of freedom, however limited, whereas non-European views that might *prima facie* look like views of freedom are still actually modes of unfreedom."<sup>67</sup> Hegel's case for colonialism is thus, for Stone, just another consequence of this original divide that in principle only allows non-European people to access freedom via the colonial mediation of Europeans. Unfortunately, Stone's argument on Hegel and colonialism does not connect the matter to any specific feminist concern. On the other hand, her feminist engagement with Hegelian philosophy, which pleads for an essentialist reading of Hegel's conceptualization of sex and gender, turns out to be an inadequate and unviable path for critical race philosophers, as taking seriously Hegel's essentialist fixation of races via the assignment of inferior psychological, ethical, and cultural characteristics to non-Caucasian people would in any account help them in positively theorizing the "racial difference."

Hutchings's anti-essentialist approach, on the contrary, reckons with the ambivalent legacy of Hegel for feminist theory. Indeed, Hegelian philosophy incarnates both an antagonistic standpoint that does not do justice to women, excluding them from both reason and history, and a powerful resource for overcoming conceptual impasses that haunt contemporary feminist debates. As Hutchings notes, "Hegel is guilty of theoretical violence in some of his claims about women, but ... this theoretical violence can be both identified and criticized through an account of reason, knowledge and truth derived from Hegel's own work."<sup>68</sup> In other words, while rejecting the conservative stances of Hegel's political and ethical theory, Hutchings also believes that *some of the philosopher's tools can be used to dismantle the philosopher's house.*<sup>69</sup>

In that sense, Hutchings twofold approach to Hegel's philosophy develops an interpretative strategy, both critical and appropriative, that finds remarkable predecessors in feminist scholarship—such as de Beauvoir and Irigaray—but can also resonate with some perspectives developed in the genealogies of anticolonial/anti-racist thought and of the Black Radical tradition, from Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire to C.L.R. James and W.E.B. Dubois up to Teshale Tibebu. Critical appropriations of Hegel can be considered disruptive interventions that successfully aim at sabotaging the canon of Western philosophy from within.<sup>70</sup>

Tibebu's *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (2011) is a magnificent example of such a sabotage, combining a ruthless debunking of Hegel's racial and racist views, a resolute rejection of his non-universal universalism, and a sharp twisting of his phenomenological portrait of sense-certainty, into which, Tibebu argues, the whole Hegelian epistemic



enterprise ends up falling back, precisely because it relies on immediate, partial, exclusionary, and hence ungrounded assumptions. For Tibebe, Hegel develops a racist philosophy that “sees white male Protestant Europe as the model of freedom, progress, universalism, and humanism.”<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the dichotomies established by Hegel between *people of nature* and *people of culture* are central to modern colonial hierarchies that oppose barbarians to civilized people. Therefore, unmasking Hegel’s racism by countering all the readings that have the tendency to downplay it as “mere” ethnocentrism and eurocentrism attuned to the spirit of the age<sup>72</sup> becomes a major challenge beyond the scope of the *Hegel-Forschung*, an effort to brush the history of Western modernity against the grain and revisit the canon from the perspective of a critical philosophy of race. Thus Tibebe first argues that “[b]ecause Eurocentrism is a form of racism, a critique of Eurocentrism is a critique of racism.”<sup>73</sup> Secondly, he develops his critique of Hegel’s Eurocentric universalism in Hegelian terms by elaborating “a critique of racism as a form of knowledge privileging consciousness based predominantly on sense-certainty.”<sup>74</sup> For Tibebe, Hegel’s philosophy of racial profiling proves to be based on the most “primitive mark of identification: skin colour—that is, nature.”<sup>75</sup> To that extent, “to put it in Hegelian language”, he concludes, “racism is sensual rationalism based on the debasement of spirit by nature.”<sup>76</sup> “Is this the revenge of nature upon spirit?” Tibebe asks ironically.<sup>77</sup> Like the feminine embodied by Antigone that represents for Hegel *the eternal irony of the community*, race may be considered as the *manifest irony of Hegelian episteme*.

Is there a conclusion we can draw from the multilayered analysis outlined in this chapter? Is there any final verdict that can be pronounced about the significance of Hegel’s philosophy for critically reflecting on race, racial relations, and racism today? One could easily (and tautologically) argue that critical race theory, critical philosophy of race, and postcolonial and decolonial approaches, as much the traditions of antiracist thought and activism, may have much more to offer to the task of envisioning racial justice. Hegel, on the contrary, seems to merely provide a masterful theoretical legitimation of racial injustice disguised as freedom for selected superior human beings. Yet, as a thinker of racial injustice—one among many in the Western philosophical canon and yet one of its major representatives—Hegel remains a precious resource for grasping the modern *racial contract* and its persistent impact on the reality of contemporary racism. In this sense, critical philosophers of race may consider *thinking with Hegel and through Hegel* as a valuable exercise. The contribution of Hegel’s philosophy, however, is more relevant for describing and deciphering the world we live in and its long-lasting history of racial oppression, rather than for prescribing solutions about how to overcome such a history. Undoubtedly, Hegel’s discourse on race maintains an unequivocal importance for comprehending the self-portrait of Western modernity at its peak. Political prescriptions for radical social change certainly cannot be found in Hegel’s texts. Yet, his enormous and sophisticated conceptual landscape may still be able to provide food for antiracist thought and critical weapons for antiracist politics.

## Notes

1. Susan M. Easton, "Hegel and Feminism," in *Hegel and Modern Philosophy*, ed. David Lamb (London/New York/Sidney: Croom Helm, 1987), 30–55; Patricia J. Mills, *Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Antoinette M. Stafford, "The Feminist Critique Of Hegel On Women And The Family," *Animus*, no. 2 (1997): 64–92; Alison Stone, "Ethical Implications of Hegel's Philosophy of Nature," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002): 243–260; Kimberly Hutchings and Tuija Pulkkinen, ed., *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought. Beyond Antigone?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).
2. Luce Irigaray, "The Eternal Irony of the Community," in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian. C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 214–226; Patricia J. Mills, *Hegel's Antigone, The Owl of Minerva*, Vol. 17, no. 2 (1986): 131–152; Patricia J. Mills, *Women, Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Seyla Benhabib, "On Hegel, Women and Irony," in *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory*, ed. Molly Shanley and Carole Pateman (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 129–146; Kelly Oliver, "Antigone's Ghost: Undoing Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit", *Hypatia* 11, no.1 (1996): 67–90.
3. Nancy Bauer, Kimberly Hutchings, Tuija Pulkkinen, Alison Stone, "Debating Hegel's Legacy for Contemporary Feminist Politics", in Kimberly Hutchings and Tuija Pulkkinen, ed., *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought. Beyond Antigone?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 236.
4. Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011); M. A. R. Habib, *Hegel and Empire: From Postcolonialism to Globalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
5. See Rocío Zambrana, "Hegel, History, and Race," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race*, ed. Naomi Zack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 251–260.
6. See note 3.
7. Robert Bernasconi, "Hegel at the Court of Ashanti," in *Hegel After Derrida*, ed. Stuart Barnett (New York: Routledge, 1998), 41–63; Robert Bernasconi, "With what must the philosophy of world history begin? On the racial basis of Hegel's eurocentrism," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 22 (2000): 171–201; Sandra Bonetto, "Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis," *Minerva* 10 (2006): 35–64; Allegra De Laurentiis, "Race in Hegel : Text and Context," in *Philosophie nach Kant: Neue Wege zum Verständnis von Kants Transzendental—und Moralphilosophie*, ed. Mario Egger (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2014): 591–624; Michael H. Hoffheimer, "Hegel, race, genocide," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 39 (2001): 35–62; Darrel Moellendorf, "Racism and rationality in Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit," *History of Political Thought* 13 (1992): 243–255; Joseph Mc Carney, *Hegel on History* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000); Joseph Mc Carney, "Hegel's racism? A response to Bernasconi," *Radical Philosophy* 119 (2003): 32–35; Jong Seok Na, "The Dark Side of Hegel's Theory of Modernity: Race and the Other", *Esercizi Filosofici* 14 (2019): 49–71; Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011).
8. In the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* Hegel does not refer to "race(s)" explicitly, however, as the chapter aims at showing, the "history of the Spirit" summarized at the end of the *Grundlinien* contributes to sustain the conceptual architecture of Hegel's racial discourse. See in particular § 346 (HW 7: 505).
9. In the *Encyclopaedia's* "Anthropology", Hegel primarily uses the word *Rasse* to refer to "race". *Geschlecht* appears only occasionally as in relation to (Native) Americans that he describes as a "vanishing, feeble race" [*ein verschwindendes schwaches Geschlecht*] (HW 10: 63)—or in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* where Hegel refers to the Orientals as "*ein einförmiges Geschlecht*" (HW 12: 277). *Menschengeschlecht* usually stands for "mankind/human race", as well as *Menschengattung*. Sometimes, however, Hegel refers to *Menschengattungen*

- (Z §395; HW 10: 70) and *Menschenrassen* (Z §393, Z §396; HW 10: 58, 76) as plurals, or to *Menschengattung* as singular (Z §393; HW 10: 57) presupposing nevertheless a plurality and a hierarchy of *Menschengattungen* as in Z §393 where he speaks of the superiority of one human species over the other: “*die geistige Überlegenheit der eninen Menschengattung über die andere*” (HW 10: 57). Sandra Bonetto provides a different interpretation of Hegel’s semantics of race: “In Hegelian usage *Rasse/Geschlecht* (race) may be regarded as cognate with *Nation* insofar as it denotes a group of individuals that are descendants of the same family, house, or tribe, united by common ancestry or blood relationship. [...] Thus, while there is only one human species (*Gattung* or *Menschengattung*), there are natural differences between various populations within the species determined by geographical factors,” Sandra Bonetto, “Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis,” *Minerva* 10 (2006): 39.
10. See § 390 where Hegel writes “But the natural determinacy of soul is to be conceived as a totality, as a copy of the concept. The first stage here is therefore the entirely universal, qualitative determinations of soul. Here belong especially the *racial differences, both physical and mental, of humanity and also the differences of national spirit [die Unterschiede der Nationalgeister]*” (HW 10: 50; trans. modified, emph. added). Hegel seems to establish a correspondence between racial varieties, on the one hand, and people/nations on the other hand. This aspect also finds evidence in the following passage at § 394, where Hegel explains that “This differentiation descends into particularities, which may be termed *local spirits [Lokalgeister], shown in the outward modes of life, occupation, bodily structure and disposition, but still more in the inner tendency and capacity of the intellectual and ethical character of the peoples [des intelligenten und sittlichen Charakters],*” (HW 10: 63; trans. modified, emph. added). In the *Zusatz* of §394 Hegel emphasizes further the particularization of the racial difference into “the plurality of local or national spirits” [*in die Mannigfaltigkeit der Lokal- oder Nationalgeister*] (HW 10: 63–64; trans. modified).
  11. Hegel establishes also a clear correspondence between racial and geographical differences. As we read in the addition to § 393, “The difference between the races of mankind is still a natural difference, that is, a difference that initially concerns the natural soul. *As such, the difference is connected with the geographical differences of the territory where human beings congregate in large masses*” (HW 10: 58; emph. added). Moreover, in the same *Zusatz* to § 393 he adds that “After having thus attempted to show that *the differences between the continents are not contingent but necessary, we wish to determine, in a physical and spiritual respect, the racial diversities of humanity connected with these geographical differences*” (HW 10: 58; emph. added). A paradigmatic case is the description of the African race (*Afrikanische Rasse*): “their mind is entirely dormant, it remains sunk within itself, it makes no progress, and thus corresponds to the compact, *undifferentiated* mass of the African land (HW 10: 60, 65).
  12. See Michael H. Hoffheimer, “Hegel, race, genocide,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 39 (2001): 35–62. With regards to Hegel’s rapprochement between races and peoples/nations, it is interesting to note that he speaks of the Negroes (*Neger*) as a *Kindnation* (HW 10: 59). Undoubtedly, Hegel never equates *Völker* and races, however he constantly establishes correspondences that assign peoples to races.
  13. Robert Bernasconi, “With what must the philosophy of world history begin? On the racial basis of Hegel’s eurocentrism,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 22 (2000): 171–201; Darrel Moellendorf, “Racism and rationality in Hegel’s philosophy of subjective spirit,” *History of Political Thought* 13 (1992): 243–255.
  14. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Vol. 1. Manuscripts of the introduction and the lectures of 1822–23* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 201.
  15. According to Hegel, the *characterization of the multiplicity of local or national spirits* concerns both natural history and the philosophy of history (Z § 394): “The naturalness of the spirit does not have the power to assert itself as the pure copy of the determinations of the concept; it proceeds to a further particularization of these universal differences and so descends into the plurality of local or national spirits. The detailed characterization of these spirits

belongs partly to the natural history of man and partly to the philosophy of world history. The former science depicts the disposition of national character as affected by natural conditions, the bodily formation, the mode of life, occupation, and also the particular directions taken by the intelligence and the will of nations. Philosophy of history, by contrast, has as its object the world-historical significance of peoples, that is—if we take world history in the most comprehensive sense of the word—the highest development to which the original disposition of the national character attains, the most spiritual form to which the natural spirit dwelling in the nations ascends. Here in philosophical anthropology we cannot go into the details, the consideration of which is the responsibility of the two sciences just mentioned. We have here to consider *national character only in so far as it contains the germ from which the history of nations develops*. First and foremost it can be remarked that “*national differences are just as fixed as the racial diversity of mankind ... The unchangeableness of climate, of the whole character of the country in which a nation has its permanent abode, contributes to the unchangeableness of the national character*” (HW 10: 44–45; trans. modified, emphasis added).

16. Alison Stone, “Hegel and Colonialism,” *Hegel Bulletin* 41 (2020): 247–270.
17. Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 324–351.
18. Jong Seok Na, “The Dark Side of Hegel’s Theory of Modernity: Race and the Other”, *Esercizi Filosofici* 14 (2019): 49–71. See in particular: Sandra Bonetto, “Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis,” *Minerva* 10 (2006): 35–64; Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History: An Introduction to Hegel’s Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005); Walter A. Kaufmann, “The Hegel Myth and Its Method,” *The Philosophical Review* 60, no. 4 (1951): 459–486; Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Terry Pinkard, *Hegel’s Naturalism: Mind, Nature and the Final Ends of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Terry Pinkard, *Does History Make Sense? Hegel on the Historical Shapes of Justice* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2017).
19. Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 22–23.
20. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 493.
21. Sandra Bonetto, “Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis,” *Minerva* 10 (2006): 35–64.
22. *Ibid.*, 50. See also Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), 177.
23. *Ibid.*, 51–52.
24. Philip J. Kain, *Hegel and the Other: A Study of the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 254; Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 340. Susanne Lettow suggests that there is no opposition between the two claims, as indeed, Hegel’s geological account of “racial diversities” refers to contemporary earth sciences instead of biology. Lettow suggests that “On the one hand, Hegel explicitly rejects a proto-biological, genealogical understanding of race as based on reproduction and heredity. On the other hand, he introduces an understanding of genealogy according to which ‘races’ are produced and reproduced by the earth itself.” See Susanne Lettow, “Re-Articulating Genealogy. Hegel on Kinship, Race and Reproduction,” *Hegel Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (2021): 256–276.
25. Joseph Mc Carney, *Hegel on History* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 143.
26. Darrel Moellendorf, “Racism and rationality in Hegel’s philosophy of subjective spirit,” *History of Political Thought* 13 (1992): 243.
27. *Ibid.*, 243–255.
28. Alison Stone, “Hegel and Colonialism,” *Hegel Bulletin* 41 (2020): 247–270.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Robert Bernasconi, “A Reply to McCarney,” *Radical Philosophy* 119 (2003): 35–37; Joseph Mc Carney, “Hegel’s racism? A response to Bernasconi,” *Radical Philosophy* 119 (2003): 32–35.
31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*
33. Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 332.
34. *Ibid.*, 331.
35. *Ibid.*, 330. See also Jong-Seok Na, "The Dark Side of Hegel's Theory of Modernity: Race and the Other," *Esercizi Filosofici* 14 (2019): 69.
36. Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 325.
37. As Seyla Benhabib highlights, "Geist which emerges from nature, transforms nature into a second world; this 'second nature' comprises the human, historical world of tradition, institutions, laws, and practices (*objektiver Geist*), as well as the self-reflection of knowing and acting subjects upon objective spirit, which is embodied in works of art, religion and philosophy (*absoluter Geist*)." Yet, in spite of thinking of Hegel's conception of nature as always already mediated by spirit, Benhabib wonders to what extent Hegel's concept of the Geist allows him to overcome the naturalistic understanding of gender of the modern age and "place the relation between the sexes in the social, symbolic, historical, and cultural world." Seyla Benhabib, "On Hegel, Women and Irony," in *Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel*, ed. Patricia J. Mills (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 29.
38. Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 330.
39. An exception is the creation of the State of Haiti as a Christian State, that Hegel mentions in the *Encyclopaedia* (Z §393, HW 10: 60). Hegel states here that the Negroes "not only have they, here and there, adopted Christianity with the greatest gratitude and spoken with emotion of the freedom they have acquired through Christianity after a long spiritual servitude, but in Haiti they have even formed a state on Christian principles." See Sandra Bonetto, "Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis," *Minerva* 10 (2006): 47.
40. One can still speak of a *heavily naturalistic grounding* in relation to both Hegel's conception of race and gender. Hegel affirms in the § 393 of the *Encyclopaedia* that "The difference between the races of mankind is still a natural difference, that is, a difference that initially concerns the natural soul," (HW 10: 58); similarly, in the § 165 of the *Philosophy of Right*, he writes "The natural determinacy of the two sexes acquires an intellectual and ethical significance by virtue of its rationality" (HW 7: 318). See also Patricia J. Mills, *Women, Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 43. For a different account of Hegel's understanding of gender and race, see: Sue Easton, "Slavery and Freedom: Towards a Feminist Reading of Hegel," *Politics*, 5, no. 2 (1985): 22–28; Susanne Lettow, "Re-Articulating Genealogy. Hegel on Kinship, Race and Reproduction," *Hegel Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (2021): 256–276. In particular, see again Bonetto's thesis against biological readings of Hegel's conception of race: "Unlike many early nineteenth century anatomists, notably Camper, Soemmering and Cuvier, Hegel did not regard cranial capacity as a marker of racial or cultural hierarchy. Again, attempts by these anatomists to demonstrate that Africans (the Ethiopian race), on the basis of the shape of their skull, are closer to the apes than to human beings, do not conform to Hegel's belief that we can know nothing of the 'inner being' of a man on the basis of his skull bone," Sandra Bonetto, "Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis," *Minerva* 10 (2006): 43.
41. See note 16.
42. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), 163.
43. Patricia J. Mills, *Women, Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 12.
44. *Ibid.*, 38–39.
45. Jong-Seok Na, "The Dark Side of Hegel's Theory of Modernity: Race and the Other," *Esercizi Filosofici* 14 (2019): 62.
46. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, ed., *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave, Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1981).



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