1. Cavell and the Achievement of Selfhood

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Here is a passage from the discussion of rhythm in music in Hegel's *Aesthetics* that will, I suggest, help us to make sense of some important ideas in Cavell about the achievement of selfhood.[1] This runs some risk of explicating the obscure, Cavell, by reference to the unintelligible, Hegel, but Hegel also helps us here specifically to focus on the ontology and ontogeny of selfhood.

> The I is not indeterminate persistence and uninterrupted duration, but rather only becomes a self as collection and return into itself [als Sammlung und Rückkehr in sich].[2] It transforms this sublation of itself, through which it be-

1. I have a battery of interrelated reasons for focusing on a Hegelian understanding of selfhood. A) It is difficult to make sense of putative entities that do not occupy space and cannot readily be counted, such as a Cartesian soul. No entity without identity. In contrast, human bodies as loci of subjectivity can readily be counted. B) Insuperable interaction problems (noted by Hegel in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*) arise if we posit primitive, internal, nonspatial purely mental representers. These problems include the problem of the external world, the problem of other minds, and the problem of non-material causality. C) The positing of such internal representers mistakenly intellectualizes experience into the receipt of data to be assessed, thus denying the multimodal character of our bodily involvements with objects. There is no implicit sub-basement to conceptualization. D) Primitive internal representers make it impossible to account for normativity and relations of material implication. E) "seems"-language and "appears"-language are temporally and logically posterior to "is-"language. F) Positing primitive internal representers unhappily encodes and reinforces alienation from materiality, experience, and other subjects. G) In contrast with Aristotle, who holds a similar view in some respects, Hegel is aware of the possibilities of alienation and of significant historical change in conceptual repertoires. Readers will recognize themes from Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson, Sellars, and Brandom among others here. I do not dwell on these points here given that, first, each is worth an extended argument on its own, and, second, for resistant readers none of them is likely to carry conviction: we might do better to appreciate these points by understanding the practico-conceptual lives of human subjects downstream, as it were, rather than ontogenetically in the terms of ontogenesis that are favored within the natural sciences.

2. Hegel's use of "Sammlung" here bears interesting affinities to Augustine's account in the *Confessions* of the dawning nature of awareness of external objects, recognized under concepts.

To know objects as persisting things apart from me, "and as they actually are, is in reality only to take things that the memory already contained, but scattered and unarranged, and by thinking bring them together, and by close attention have them placed within reach in that same memory: so that things, which had formerly lain there scattered and not considered, now come easily and familiarly to us. And my memory carries an immense number of things of this sort, which have already been discovered and, as I have said, placed within reach—the things we are said to have learned and to know. Yet if I ceased to give thought to them for quite a short space of time, they would sink again and fall away into the more remote recesses of the memory, and I should have to think them out afresh and put them together again from the same place—for there is nowhere else for them to have gone—if I am to know them: in ocher "words they must be collected out of dispersion, and indeed the verb to cogitate is named

> comes an object to itself, into being-for-itself and is now through this relation to itself for the first time self-feeling and self-consciousness, and so forth. This collection essentially involves an *interruption* of merely undetermined change —which is what we had had before us—in that the arising and passing away, the disappearance and renewal of points of time was, prior to this collection, nothing but a merely formal passing over from each now to another similar one and thus nothing but an uninterrupted further movement. In contrast with this empty moving *forward*, the self is that which exists *with itself*, and its collection into itself interrupts the indeterminate succession of points of time, makes cuts in their abstract continuity, and frees the I, which remembers itself in these now discrete moments of its experience and retrieves itself in them, from mere self-externalization and change.[3]

Here neither the I nor the self is a fixed, given, persistent thing, if it is even correct to think of it as a thing at all. Rather, there is living, embodied human being who first develops an I or sense of self as a locus of agency through collecting its sensations, that is, holding them together as sensations that pertain to a *this* in the world.[4] We might think here of an infant developing not yet conceptually articulated proprioceptive awareness of the position of its hand and its own effects as agent on both the hand's motion and on the sensations that accompany it. In a second step, this initial sublation of itself through which it has become initially but inarticulately aware of itself as a thing in interaction with things in the world is then extended by memory and the focusing of attention on the object interacted with as distinct from other objects. The object—a hand, a rattle, a plush toy—is held in mind as a recognizable thing under a protoconcept, so that the infant becomes a conscious classifier or proto-claim-

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from this drawing together. For *cogito* (I think) has the same relation to *cogo* (I put together) as *agito* (I excite) to *ago* (I drive) and *factito* (I keep doing) to *facio* (I do). But the mind of man has claimed the word *cogitate* completely for its own: not what is put together anywhere else but only what is put together in the mind is called cogitation." (As the editor notes, the point here is that *cogito* is an intensification [and persistence] of *cogo* [that yields a stable product].) Augustine, *Confessions*, 2nd edn., ed. Michael P. Foley, trans. F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 199.

3. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Vol, III, ed. Karl Markus Michel and Eva Moldenhauer (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1986), 164-65 (my translation).

4. For a full explication of Hegel's individual developmental psychology or account of Subjective Spirit, as he lays it out in the Anthropology and Phenomenology sections of Part III of his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, see Richard Eldridge, "Hegel's Account of the Unconscious and Why it Matters," *The Review of Metaphysics* 67, no. 3 (2014): 491-516.

maker: a being for itself who *takes* itself, as an object of which it is now aware, to be interacting with recognizable things. All this counts as the interruption, through the emergence of an embodied subject who thinks and does things, of what would otherwise be a mere succession of law-governed events in nature. Instead of indeterminate succession of mere events, there is now a subject attending to objects recognitively and holding them before itself. Through this interruption or cut in experience, the thus emergent subject is "freed from mere self-externalization and change," freed *to* begin to exercise agency consciously. Interestingly, the reason that this passage occurs in Hegel's discussion of rhythm in music is that the experience of rhythm can feed what the cognitive archaeologist Lambros Malafourdis, echoing Antonio Damasio, calls, a "complex associative enchainment between the 'internal' and 'external' elements of remembering."[5] The experience of rhythm helps our sensations, sense of agency, and registerings of objects as objects to sync up, thus bringing the world into view for an emergent subject.

That the I or the subject emerges, or that selfhood is achieved, in having a sense of agency in exercise and a somewhat stabilized point of view on things is, of course, also and even more familiar to us from Freud.[6] Freud adds or makes explicit the further thought that this emergence and achievement are never complete, as the ego remains caught between troubling libidinal fantasies and superego commands that are internalizations of the authority of others. Given, further, the varieties of others with whom we must engage and who frequently have conflicting habits of judgment and expectations for us, *how* to exercise agency and stabilize selfhood satisfactorily remains a fraught issue for us. The continuing, conflicting pressures on the subject in development are the stuffs of dreams, parapraxes, jokes, and neuroses. Hegel similarly notes the standing possibility of a "rupture [...] between my psychical [or primary process-sensual] and my waking [or ego-centered] being, between my spontaneous natural feeling and my mediated, intellectual consciousness, a rupture which,

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5. Lambros Malafourdis, "Between Brains, Bodies, and Things: Tectonoetic Awareness and the Extended Self," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences*, June 12, 2008, 363, 1499: 1993-2002, 1999. Malabouris presents what he describes as "a view of selfhood as an extended and distributed phenomenon that is enacted across the skin barrier and which thus comprises both neural and extra-neural resources" (1993).
6. Though it might go without saying, it is also worth noting that the Freud in whom I am interested here is not Freud as a neurophysiologist or scientist, but rather Freud as a reader of pressures on subject formation and of the expression of those pressures in various domains of the lives of subjects.

since everyone embraces these two sides in himself is of course a *possibility* in even the healthiest individual, but does not actually *exist* in everyone."[7]

Cavell's own experience of Freud is as formative for him as the experience of any other writer, save perhaps Wittgenstein, and the encounter with Wittgenstein was already prepared and shaped by his prior encounter with Freud. During his brief time at Juilliard in 1947-48, Cavell reports, he found his "ambition to compose music … replaced as it were by reading Freud ten to twelve hours a day, successively contracting the symptoms of hysteria and of obsession depicted in the *Introductory Lectures*.[8] In addition, Cavell himself twice entered psychoanalytic treatment, once in the late 1950s under the pressure of a foundering first marriage and as he was having difficulty completing his doctoral dissertation, once again in the late 1970s as he was encountering the demands of fatherhood for a second time and having trouble transforming the dissertation into what would become *The Claim of* Reason.[9]

Two thoughts that derive from his encounters with Freud are especially important for Cavell. First, thinking about a succession of minor childhood accidents, Cavell finds himself, he reports,

> responding to a recurrent surmise of mine that whatever happens—whatever is eventful enough for speech—is from the beginning accidental, as if a human life is inherently interrupted, things chronically occurring at unripe times, in the wrong tempo, comically or poignantly. This is not incompatible with Freud's view that there are no accidents. What that now means to me is that we chronically interrupt ourselves—say, we fail to give the right quality or quantity or time to our thoughts or deeds.[10]

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7. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), §406Z, 116. For an excellent account of how, after 1926, Freud came to regard anxiety (arising in the continuing course of subject formation and development) as the cause of repression, rather than vice versa, see Marcia Cavell, *Becoming a Subject: Reflections in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Somewhat more strongly than Freud, Hegel stresses that the fragile achievement of psychic health is also a fragile sociopolitical achievement, bound up with occupying social roles under which one wins recognition.
8. Cavell, *Little Did I Know: Excerpts from Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 185. Cf. 234 and Cavell, *Cities of Words: Pedagogical Letters on a Register of the Moral Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 282.
9. Cavell, *Little Did I Know*, 108-9.
10. Ibid., 30.

What this passage says is that in our efforts at achieving stable, fluent subjecthood—in Hegelian terms, freedom, or being with oneself in another, *bei sich selbst in einem anderen*—, we always, in circumstances we can't control, find ourselves getting in the way of ourselves: persisting in awkwardness and anxiety and failing to achieve full at homeness in what we do, as new things always happen. In light of this, it is inept to regard finding and sustain senses of value and agency in life as an engineering problem, solvable by grasping and applying a formula. Degrees of uncertainty and anxiety about stability and reception attach inevitably to the formation and expression of selfhood. Or as Cavell remarks, "I remain too impressed with Freud's vision of the human animal's compromise with existence—the defense or the deflection of our ego in our knowledge of ourselves from what there is to know about ourselves––to suppose that a human life can get itself without residue into the clear."[11]

Second, out of this experience of immigrancy in the exercise of conceptually structured agency, there then arises a sense of a need for liberation that Cavell also finds articulated in Freud. "The sufferer," Cavell remarks

> has to be, as Freud characteristically puts the matter, awakened [...] [from] feeling himself a prisoner of his circumstances. This sense of imprisonment, of the need for liberation, is critical both for Wittgenstein philosophizing and for Emersonian perfectionist aspiration. I have sometimes called it the crisis from which the wish for philosophy and for a morally comprehensible life begins.[12]

In this remarkable passage, Freud is invoked in order to characterize the motivation of the writerly, self-interrogative styles of doing philosophy—those of Wittgenstein and Emerson—that have been most immediately influential for Cavell's own philosophical writing and in furthering his sense of the contours of genuinely available liberation from chaotic succession and into greater practical self-comprehension, into a more morally comprehensible life. It is worth noting the strikingly Freudian sound of some of Cavell's own remarks about the practice of philosophy, early and late:

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11. Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," in Cary Wolfe, Cora Diamond, Cavell, and Ian Hacking, *Philosophy and Animal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 121.
12. Cavell, *Cities of Words*, 284.

> 1) That it "is to be achieved through mapping the fields of consciousness lit by the occasions of a word."[13]
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> 2) That it is a matter of "proceed[ing] from the fact *that* a thing is said; that it is (or can be) said (in certain circumstances) is as significant as what it says; its being said then and there is as determinative of what it says as the meanings of its individual words are."[14]
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> 3) That its progress is "not as from false to true assertions, or from opinions to proven conclusions (say theses) or from doubt to certainty, but rather from the darkness of confusion to enlightened understanding, or say from illusion to clarity, or from being at an intellectual loss to finding my feet with myself, from insistent speech to productive silence."[15]
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> 4) "That we are the successors of ourselves [...] and not necessarily succeeding in a given order or direction (but capable of choosing upward or downward or neither), is a reasonable figure of the perfectionist life, seizing crises of revelation, good or bad, clear or confused, as chances of transforma-tion."[16]

Beyond various remarks about Freud, Cavell's own most extended and powerful pieces of writing on the development of the emergent subject away from anxiety and toward fluency as an unending task are "The Argument of the Ordinary" in *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* and the "Excursus on Wittgenstein's Vision of Language" in *The Claim of Reason*. In the later, 1990 text, Cavell characterizes the "portrait of the human self" in *Philosophical Investigations* as one that, "like Plato's and Freud's visions" presents "a self that incorporates selves,"[17] thus alluding to the introjection of authoritative others into the formation of the superego that is essential to the emergence of selfhood. Kripke's error in reading Wittgenstein, as Cavell sees it, is that he "evades Wittgenstein's preoccupation with philosophy's desire to underestimate or evade the ordinary":[18] fails to recognize, that is, anxieties about selfhood in development in relations with others that themselves drive the human subject, as

13. Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 103.
14. Ibid., 336.
15. Cavell, *Cities of Words*, 328.
16. Ibid., 337.
17. Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 83.
18. Ibid., 68.

Wittgenstein depicts it in the first voice of the *Investigations*—one of his contending voices and one of ours—ever anew to seek a ground of perfect authority in conceptual performance and thus to overcome the very possibility of shame. In this way, we live our skepticism, first, as a disappointment with the ordinary's inability to provide that perfect authority, as concept applications and resultant routes of practice and interest remain always in part divided and contested, and, second, in a resultant turn toward fantasized perfect authority in an unmediated encounter with something within.[19] The problem that leads to skepticism is not a self-standing intellectual problem to be solved by clever reasoning, but rather the very need to ask the question "do I know anything with absolute, unimpugnable certainty?"—a need that is always already motivated by the standing immigrancy of the human subject.

The "Excursus on Wittgenstein's Vision on Language" is oriented around the fundamental thought that "'learning' is not as academic a matter as academics are apt to suppose."[20] (Compare Socrates in the *Symposium*: one does not acquire wisdom in practice in the way that water "always flows from a full cup into an empty one when we connect them with a piece of yarn."[21] In particular, learning a language is neither a matter only of information intake and processing nor a matter of being told what a name means or learning new words.[22] Instead, it involves coming to recognize and to take an interest in some things in which others also take an interest and manifesting that interest in a bodily, behavioral repertoire that involves emotion, stance, gaze, and awareness of others as well as simply pronouncing some object *a* to be *F*. How much of all this is learned when is never fully settled—even if broad competence in a normal domain can be determined—insofar as what other, different subjects become interested in and how they may display that interest is itself never fully settled. "The learning is," as Cavell puts it, "never over, and we keep finding new potencies in words and new ways in which objects are disclosed."[23] Projections of words onto things are both stable enough to admit of being shared enough *and* tolerant of new

19. For a substantial elaboration and defense of Cavell's reading of both Wittgenstein and the motivation of skepticism, see Eldridge, *Leading a Human Life: Wittgenstein, Intentionality, and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), ch. 8 and 9.
20. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 171.
21. Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 175D, 5.
22. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 173.
23. Ibid., 180.

usages. (Wittgenstein: "the use of [a] word [...] is not everywhere bounded by rules."[24]) It is always possible to find oneself with another in certain straits of circumstance where it unclear whether going on together is possible. Driven by existential anxiety about the authoritativeness of his claim-making as a subject, the skeptic removes himself from the communicative testing of mutual intelligibility, hoping instead to find absolute assurance within. "Nothing is more human than the wish to deny one's humanity, or to assert it at the expense of others,"[25] precisely by withdrawing from engagement with them. Exactly this unappeasable yet natural wish, together with the situation of the subject that supports it, is what is registered in *Philosophical Investigations* as Cavell reads it.

> Philosophical Investigations is in effect a portrait of the unsatisfiability of the human species with its solutions, a portrait-hardly the first—detailing human life as one of restlessness, exposure, insecurity; and more specifically, of [...] its articulation of the modern subject, namely its expected reader, as someone characterized by, among other traits, perversity, sickness, selfdestructiveness, suffocation, lostness, strangeness, etc.[26]

The fact that for Cavell it is within the communicative testing of mutual intelligibility and only within that testing—within the argument of the ordinary—that selfhood as at least partial at-homeness in conceptual and practical agency can be achieved explains Cavell's sense that in philosophy there are certain "arguments that must not be won."[27] To absent oneself from communicative interaction in a putative reversion to absolute conceptual authority is to abandon all possibilities of reassurance and recognition, even if nothing is more human than to do this. As early as "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," Cavell urged that introducing supposedly authoritative formulae in the form of necessarily true statements of necessary and sufficient conditions is often, even typically, a way of stunting one's own responsiveness both to diffi-

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24. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* rev. 4th edn., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2009), §68, 37e.
25. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 109.
26. Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," 110.
27. Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy: Autobiographical Exercises* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 22.

cult phenomena that require patient, ambivalent attention and to others who might respond differently and in doing so help one to notice things one might oneself have missed. In contrast with strict definition mongering, the definitional claims of philosophy ought rather to be modeled on the procedures of the ordinary language philosopher, who issues claims about what we say not in order to foreclose conversation but instead to test the possibility and shape of shared response. "Philosophy's first virtue, as it matters most to me, is," as Cavell puts it, "responsiveness,"[28] not doctrinal knowledge. We live and achieve selfhood, to the extent that we can, as assurance in exercises of conceptual and practical agency, always already within a largely shared but never fully fixed and bounded field of concepts and possibilities of interest, always already within a partially open form of life, with possibilities of expressive, vertical development. Cavell specifically warns "against supposing that the ordinary in human life is a given, as it were a place. I would say rather that it is a task, as the self is."[29] Within the field of the ordinary, with both its possibilities of meaning and its tensions, "the human necessity of the quest for home and the human fact of immigrancy are together seen as aspects of the human as such."[30]

We are now in a position to make fuller sense of a crucial early passage on the achievement of selfhood from *The World Viewed*:

> At some point the unhinging of our consciousness from the world interposed our subjectivity between us and our presentness to the world. Then our subjectivity became what is present to us, individuality became isolation. [...] Apart from the wish for selfhood (hence the always simultaneous granting of otherness as well), I do not understand the value of art. Apart from this wish and its achievement, art is exhibition.[31]

Initially, this passage bears some comparison with Pierre Hadot's work on ancient philosophy as a set of spiritual exercises or practices for the cultivation of the self within the various ancient schools rather than a body of systematic theory. Like Ca-

28. Cavell, *Cities of Words*, 324.
29. Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," 96.
30. Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy*, 47.
31. Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, enlarged edn. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 22.

vell, Hadot holds that, especially in its origins, "the philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level[32]" but is rather initiated by "an unhappy disquiet before conversion."[33] Similarly, for Cavell, "the thinkers and artists" whose work he is most concerned to take up in *Cities of Words* each develop and enact "a perspective of judgment upon the world as it is, measured against the world as it may be, [that] tends to express disappointment with the world as it is, as the scene of human activities and prospects, and perhaps to lodge the demand or desire for a reform or transfiguration of the world."[34] For both Hadot and Cavell, philosophy begins in unrest, discontentment, disquietude, and belatedness, from within our immigrancy as emergent subjects and from a felt need for orientation to which *theoria* cannot ultimately answer.

According to Hadot, the displacement of spiritual exercises by *theoria* occurred first during the late medieval period with the systematization of theology as a master body of knowledge within the university, and it was then sealed in the early modern period in the work of Descartes.[35] Cavell similarly notes, just a page earlier than the key passage about the achievement of selfhood, that there has been a "human wish, intensifying since the Reformation, to escape subjectivity and metaphysical isolation—a wish for the power to reach this world, having for so long tried, at last hopelessly, to manifest fidelity to another."[36] (The allusion here is presumably to the kingdom of God or church triumphant as the object to which we once sought to be faithful.)

But where according to Hadot, this displacement might and should simply be reversed by taking up some elements of Epicurean and Stoic practice, as perhaps Nietzsche also urged,[37] matters are less clear with Cavell. The wish for selfhood—for heightened assurance in exercises of conceptual and practical agency—has intensified since the Reformation rather than being displaced. It is, if anything, more sharply present, intensified, albeit in an ineffective way, in Cartesian and post-Cartesian skepticism and realism—two sides of the same coin for Cavell; two responses to the

32. Pierre, Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 83.
33. Ibid., 102.
34. Cavell, *Cities of Words*, 1, 2.
35. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 107-08, 270-71.
36. Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 21.
37. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 212, 273-74.

same initiating unhinging of subjectivity from the world—than in earlier practices of philosophy. There is, one might say, a certain fervor to modern and modernist pursuits of selfhood, as a sense of available grounds for achieving and expressing selfhood withinn coherent, meaningful, shared practice becomes increasingly attenuated.[38] And, unlike Hadot, there is for Cavell no obvious way out of the bearing of the wish for selfhood unsatisfied, at least in some measure. Nor was there any time in a recognizably human form of life in which that wish was not somehow born by some as freighted with existential anxiety. Achilles and Oedipus, for example were trying to figure who they could most coherently, intelligibly, and recognizably be in practice, albeit more under the sways of nature and luck than we are and under more fully shared, thick social scripts than we inhabit. We live among and with others who are different from us in various dimensions of interest and activity, where these differences, ramifying in modernity with technological development and broad and deep divisions of labor, are sharp enough to block standing general assurance and to leave its achievement always in question.

But while there is no obvious place to go either to satisfy or to be free of the wish for selfhood, there are also possibilities of responsive address to it that are manifest in the work of major artists and those among the philosophers who rank with them. Such figures—from Plato to Wittgenstein, from Shakespeare to Ibsen, from Thoreau to Emerson, from Frank Capra to Leo McCarey—sometimes find themselves in their work achieving a kind of fullness of attention to life and its difficult phenomena to which audiences of considerable circumference can and have resonated, where the object of resonance is less a formulable solution to the problem of the achievement of selfhood than a dramatized itinerary of either approach to it or evasion of it. When one finds oneself as a receptive subject in the grip of such resonance with an artistic work's achievement of apt attentiveness and point of view, then one has been summoned by the work to a like achievement and enactment of selfhood (with like and unlike objects of attention). One's life of habit and routine has been interrupted productively by an encounter with a fuller, more sublime mode of attention. Making art as a mode of address to the further formation of selfhood mobilizes and exercises

38. Compare Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1974) on the transcendental homelessness of the modern subject in contrast with the more fully role-identifying subject of Ancient Greek epic.

of powers of statement, memory, thematization, association, judgment, and craft, among others, in complex interaction with each other. In doing so, at least when things go well, it achieves attention to phenomena of shared life, and it invites and sustains imaginative participation in its modes of attention. It enacts the achievement of exemplary selfhood.

Toward the end of the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel wrote: "For it is in the nature of humanity to press onward to agreement with others; human nature only really exists in an achieved community of minds."[39] Taken as a biological claim, this remark is outrageously false. The existence of human nature biologically requires nothing more than being a living being with forty-six chromosomes. But this obvious falsity is here a mark of the metaphorical. The next sentence reads: "the anti-human, the merely animal consists in staying within the sphere of feeling, and being able to communicate only at that level."[40] This makes it clear that Hegel's thought must be, first, that we fail to exist as distinctly human *subjects* insofar as we fail achieve and maintain selfhood through exercises of conceptual and practical agency that win sufficient assurance and recognition, and, second, that we can do better. That it remains our task to do this ever anew and ever incompletely—the fate of reason, or of our being self-conscious, reflective beings—is a thought that has nowhere been kept more alive and movingly pertinent to us than in the work of Stanley Cavell, a post-Hegelian, post-Freudian thinker of the emergence of selfhood, always incompletely, in the inheritance of culture and in selfhood's finding of good enough modes of satisfaction in exemplary artistic responsiveness to its situations.[41]

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39. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans, A. V. Miller, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43. The German reads:" Denn die Natur dieser [der Humanität] ist, auf die Übereinkunft mit anderen zu dringen, und ihre Existenz nur in der zustande gebrachten Gemeinsamkeit der Bewußtsein[e]." (Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, eds. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michels [Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1986], 65. Miller's translation best captures this.
40. Ibid., 43.
41. My thanks to the participants in the Rio Grande do Sul conference on Cavell, Skepticism, and the Ordinary (especially to Eric Ritter for his written comments) and to the participants in the Ottawa conference on Inheriting Cavell for their useful and generous responses to earlier versions of this essay. One way to think of this essay is to take "inheriting" in "Inheriting Cavell" as an adjectival gerund.