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The Right of Resistance as the Struggle for Recognition: Reading Hegel Against Hegel

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Abstract

Axel Honneth, drawing on the methodology of the Frankfurt School critical theorists, frames *The Struggle for Recognition* around a rehabilitation of a social theory of intersubjectivity found in Hegel's early writings and in the *Philosophy of Right*. The aim, on Honneth's account, is to offer a normative and critical social theory capable of extending Hegel's theory of recognition beyond the sphere of legal right, wherein Honneth believes Hegel abandons his project in favor of a 'philosophy of consciousness' (or, the unilateral objectification of Spirit at the level of the State). It is the "struggle for recognition," Honneth claims, that drives social progress and the actualization of individual freedom at the level of civil society, but this struggle becomes subsumed under the institutionalized relations of social interaction and exchange that constitute the State. The present analysis examines Honneth's exploration of intention in the context of the right of necessity, and its subsequent implications on the yet-unsolved problem of the rabble in Hegel's theory of the State. I begin by positioning Honneth's theory of recognition in the corpus of Hegel's work, to better assess Honneth's own critique of Hegel's philosophico-political teleology. As will become clear, Honneth finds the theory of recognition between subjects transformed into the positive relationship between the educated subject and the State in the second half of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. The consequence of this reorientation, so to speak, is to rob *PR* of the socially progressive move it could have extended to a theorization of "disrespected" subjects' political and moral struggles for recognition. By drawing on Honneth's and Hegel's writings, I offer a reading of the rabble centered in the conflict between State and civil society that Honneth himself neglects, predicated on a *right of resistance* that I argue is embedded within the Hegelian right of necessity.

Key Words

G.W.F. Hegel, Axel Honneth, recognition theory, social and political philosophy, social movements

I. Introduction

Axel Honneth, in his seminal, 1995 work *The Struggle for Recognition*, articulates a theory of social emancipation rooted in the primacy of intersubjectivity, characterizing man as an essentially social animal in need of reciprocal recognition for his own self-actualization as a political subject. Honneth's aim is to offer a normative and critical social theory capable of extending Hegel's theory of recognition beyond the sphere of legal right, after which Honneth believes Hegel abandons his project in favor of a 'philosophy of consciousness' (or, the unilateral objectification of Spirit at the level of the State). It is the "struggle for recognition," Honneth claims, that drives social progress and the actualization of individual freedom at the level of civil society, but this struggle becomes subsumed under the institutionalized relations of social interaction and exchange that constitute the State.

By problematizing Hegel's description of crime in the sphere of abstract right through the lens of George Herbert Mead's pragmatist social psychology, Honneth reintroduces the individual qua individual—that is, the individuated subject with her unique particularities and biographical history—as the focal point of social conflict. Accordingly, rather than characterize crime as the criminal's drive to assert her individual will over that of the universal will, as Hegel suggests in the *Philosophy of Right* §95¹, Honneth reframes criminal motivation as the radical struggle of the criminal to acquire recognition from the victim: the 'attacked' subject, Honneth claims, is meant to "see the destructive act as an attempt by the other to provoke a *reaction* on its part" (Honneth 1995, 45, emphasis added). This paper employs Honneth's notion of intention as the measure of justification for the Hegelian *right of necessity*. By situating Honneth's critique of Hegel against Hegel's exploration of the right of necessity in the *Philosophy of Right* (hereby *PR*), I hope to offer an analysis of social struggle that is itself borne out of Hegel's *right of necessity*, thereby giving us the tools not only to extend Hegel's theory of recognition to the sphere of Ethical Life on his own terms, but also to assess the yet-unresolved problem of the *rabble* in Hegel's theory of the State. Accordingly, I offer a reading of the rabble centered in the conflict between State and civil society, and I argue that this tension can be resolved by appeal to a *right of resistance* that is embedded in the Hegelian right of necessity.

II. The Rational Turn

Honneth's critique is, in many ways, structured by a genealogical analysis of Hegel's theory of recognition: by turning to the pre-1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* texts of Hegel's Jena period, Honneth characterizes the 'young' Hegel as an empirical, materialist philosopher concerned with the actualization of the human being as a socially- and historically-situated figure. It is in these texts—the 1802 *System of Ethical Life* and the 1805/6 *Realphilosophie*, both of which glean inspiration from Johann Gottlieb Fichte's conception of recognition in "The Foundations of Natural Law"—that Hegel

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most robustly articulates the struggle between subjects as a conflict that results in “the recognition of claims to autonomy previously not socially affirmed” (Honneth 1995, 69). This dialectic of struggle-to-recognition parallels, for Honneth, the Deweyan-inspired writings of G.H. Mead, for whom human beings “make cognitive gains [...] precisely in the situations in which actions are problematized during their performance” (Honneth 1995, 72). Both Hegel and Mead, as such, offer empiricist rather than transcendental accounts of social conflict, self-reflection, and overcoming.

Through his application of pragmatist social psychology to the Hegelian dialectic of social struggle, Honneth rearticulates the struggle for recognition not merely as the precursor to concretized forms of social development, but also as that which allows for the individual to understand herself as a rights-bearing subject of individuated dignity with a claim to social and political freedom. The dialectic itself can be delineated into three stages of ‘reciprocal recognition’ that are constituted by the underlying, natural progression of Spirit: (1) love, characterized by the affective relations of recognition where “human individuals are recognized as concrete creatures of need” (Honneth 1995, 25); (2) law, characterized by cognitive-formal relations of recognition where individuals are “recognized as abstract legal persons” (Honneth 1995, 25); and (3) solidarity, characterized by “emotionally enlightened” relations of recognition at the level of the State, where subjects are “recognized as concrete universals, that is, as subjects who are socialized in their particularity” (Honneth 1995, 25). In Aristotelian fashion, this genealogy emerges as the natural development of man as a social and political being, simultaneously breaking away from the atomistic accounts of social theory developed by Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes.

Because Hegel situates his work in the context of the modern state, however, the development of the ‘legal person’ emerges only against a backdrop of a universalist conceptualization of morality: because the modern state is to be the actualization of rational freedom, morality itself is constituted by the institutional norms that are themselves predicated on universal rather than individual right. More simply, we might say that rationality takes the place of morality within the State, insofar as the social and moral norms of a society are implicitly reflected in its political institutions.² As Honneth states in *Pathologies*, “we must assume that our norms and values have absorbed enough rationality to be regarded as a social context whose moral guidelines we must generally consider to be beyond doubt” (Honneth 2010, 41). Social and political institutions, as such, are to be interpreted as the objectification of the universal—the common good, *née*, rational, concrete freedom—within the sphere of ethical life. In other words, the real is not simply the rational for Hegel, but a rationality which is already intimately interwoven with the moral.

Although the focus of *Struggle* is Hegel’s 1805/6 *System of Ethical Life*, we can reframe Honneth’s critique around the third section of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: the sphere of Ethical Life. While Hegel himself, at the end of the preceding section, insists that the subjective sphere of morality cannot exist independently of the sphere of right (and vice versa, it should be noted)³, Honneth troubles the objectification of right in law as incapable of accounting for *criminal intention*. In the context of the State, subjective morality—the sphere of reciprocal recognition, so to speak—is abandoned for “an account of the organizational elements that are supposed to characterize political relations in ‘absolute ethical life’” (Honneth 1995, 24). If we understand Hegel to be applying his logic to his political philosophy as it appears in *PR*, however, this move is necessary insofar as the ethical sphere reflects the *objectification* of Spirit. Consequently,

neither the intersubjectivist concept of human identity, nor the distinction of various media of recognition (with the accompanying differentiation of recognition relations), nor, certainly, the idea of a historically productive role for moral struggle—none of these ever again acquires a systematic function within Hegel’s political philosophy. (Honneth 1995, 63)

More simply, arbitrary will (*Willkür*) must recognize the universal and develop into the rational *Wille* for man to actualize freedom, and once this is conceptually articulated, the focal point of Hegel’s political philosophy transitions from the development of freedom to the institutionalization of Spirit.

If Honneth is correct, this certainly is problematic for the picture of consciousness-as-normative—rooted in the concrete practices and habits of subjects who stand in particular sociohistorical contexts—from which Hegel seems dedicated to paint his political philosophy. To drive the point further, Hegel is offering from the onset an alternative to the atomist, individualistic articulation of the self-determining subject by positioning the socially dependent, intersubjectively self-actualizing subject as the subject of politics. It is peculiar, then, that demands of recognition in the sphere of Ethical Life become actualized through the *political education* of the citizen, which is to “produce afresh in every generation the behavioral dispositions that motivate the individual to take part in” the corresponding intersubjective practices (Honneth 2010, 55). The theory of recognition as one of dialectical overcoming and actualizing freedom has, we might say, already fulfilled its purpose by the time we arrive at the rational State.

The ‘rational turn’ that Hegel takes in his discussion of ethical life simultaneously shifts his focus to the positive relationship that subjects have, “not among each other, but rather with the State (as the embodiment of Spirit)” (Honneth 1995, 59). Problematically, Hegel does not discuss instances of non-recognition that might exist between subjects and the State as such. Marx, noting this conceptual gap, takes up an analysis of the State-civil society conflict in his *Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right.’* Therein, Marx observes that “the opposition between state and civil society is thus fixed:

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the state does not reside within but outside of civil society; it affects civil society merely through office holders to whom is entrusted the management of the state within this sphere. The opposition is not overcome by means of these office holders but has become a *legal and fixed opposition*. The state becomes alien to the nature of civil society; it becomes this nature's otherworldly realm of deputies which makes claims against civil society. (Marx 1967, 49-50)

It is the institutionalization of intersubjectivity through law, as such, which contours the threshold of recognition in a manner that is fixed, stable, and predictable. This sedimentation, however, undermines the individuated 'intentionality' of actions taken by subjects—and particularly actions of an otherwise criminal nature—in such a way that precludes the possibility of a political struggle for recognition between the individual and the State itself. The modern legal system, in other words, is able to articulate and distinguish between different kinds of empirically criminal *actions* (differentiating between murder, killing in warfare, and killing from self-defense, for example), but not always sufficiently capable of taking into consideration the intentions and potential justifications for those actions themselves.

III. Criminality and Reciprocal Recognition

One way in which to understand intentionality more fully is to examine intention in the context of *recognition*. Hegel himself offers his most explicit discussion of actional intent in the infamous master-slave dialectic in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (hereby *PS*). While a comparative analysis of the master-slave and the criminal-citizen relation is well beyond the scope of this paper, it is sufficient for our purposes to allude briefly to Hegel's characterization of the master-slave dialectic as one which illuminates the need for reciprocal recognition as a means to individuated self-actualization. For Hegel, the struggle between the two competing consciousnesses which characterizes the dialectic—in which the master "holds the [slave] in subjection" (*PS* §190)—emerges in tandem with the development of hitherto objective consciousness into subjective self-consciousness, or a consciousness-in-the-world opposed to and constituted by consciousnesses external to itself. For self-consciousness to emerge as such, however, it is not only confrontation with an opposing self-consciousness that is required, but being *recognized* by this opposing self-consciousness for the affirmation of intersubjective certainty. The master-slave conflict, then, is a byproduct of this new need for mutual recognition; it is the asymmetry of recognition that undermines the subjecthood of the non-recognized: "self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, *it exists only in being acknowledged*" (*PS* §178).

The slave's struggle for recognition is a theme that reappears in *Philosophy of Right*—albeit briefly, since the master-slave dialectic precludes the possibility of the ethical contract that emerges in the sphere of Abstract Right—insofar as it is the *slave* who is responsible for securing his freedom: "if someone is a slave," Hegel writes, "his own will is responsible, just as the responsibility lies with the will of a people if that people is subjugated" (*PR* §57). The slave's assertion of his own autonomy and self-conscious independence is a necessary step in the dialectic of freedom, part and parcel with the development of the State, which is where "the Idea of freedom is truly present" (*PR* §57). Indeed, it is not only a necessity but an *absolute right* on the part of the slave to free himself to "return into" himself and make himself "existent as Idea, as a person with rights and morality," and to possess these essentially as his own (see *PR* §66). It is a duty, in other words, to bring into existence a relation of intersubjectivity between two subjects of *equal standing* if one is to attain true recognition and, as such, actualized freedom. Though the existence of a master-slave conflict indicates a pre-rational form of social organization, the concept of "self-assertion" that Hegel is developing in these passages reflects the same sort of struggle for recognition that Honneth outlines.⁴

Moving from the slave to the criminal, Hegel's 1805/6 Jena "Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit" offers a theory of criminality that is rather distinct from that which he offers in the *Philosophy of Right*. The will of the criminal, Hegel here writes, can in certain circumstances be understood by her as the universal will itself, and when coerced by a law that ascribes its own conceptualization of the 'universal will', she is compelled to correct the personal injury suffered: "since it [my will] is injured, deprived of existence, I now produce it [i.e. re-assert it]—so that I negate the being which had posited his will as universal, opposed to my will which did not prevail" (Rauch 1983, 129-130). It is not so much the desire of the criminal to exert her own will *above* that of the universal, in other words, but rather the *desire to have her will recognized as the universal* that motivates the criminal act. Honneth, drawing on these early texts, offers a similar interpretation when he states that "Hegel traces the emergence of crime to conditions of incomplete recognition," wherein the criminal's 'interior' motive "then consists in the experience of not being recognized, at the established stage of mutual recognition, in a satisfactory way" (Honneth 1995, 20). Put more simply, Honneth asserts that "the reason why the socially ignored individuals attempt, in response, to damage the others' possessions is not because they want to satisfy their passions, but rather *in order to make the others take notice of them*" (Honneth 1995, 44, emphasis added).

If we take these two readings—that of the slave and that of the criminal of Hegel's early writings—rather stark similarities emerge. At the level of freedom, which for Hegel is always at the forefront of the metaphysical and political dialectic, both the slave and the criminal may act out of similar motivations: the desire to have their individual wills and autonomy *recognized by the Other*, insofar as "recognizing the other [...] is what makes [one] concretely free since it is what allows her to be conscious of herself in [the other]" (Ikäheimo 2013, 24). For the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right*,

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however, the assurance of this mutual recognition and intersubjective relations of respect is codified in law and sedimented in political institutions. As Honneth writes,

for social life, legal relations thus represent a sort of intersubjective basis, because they obligate every subject to treat all others according to their legitimate claims . . . it is therefore only with the establishment of the 'legal person' that a society has the minimum of communicative agreement-or 'universal will'. (Honneth 1995, 50)

Though a logical, corrective measure, however, Honneth believes the residual consequence is the deflation of the content of reciprocal recognition and actional intent. Once normative and punitive standards have been ascribed, Hegel cannot—or at the very least, *does not*—speak to the “respect” and to “what degree legal persons have to recognize each other reciprocally” (Honneth 1995, 50). And indeed, the development of corporations and estates does little but declare the ‘assurance’ of mutual relationality and recognition. Once civil society falls under the jurisdiction of social and legal institutions, in any case, a robust theory of recognition loses its driving force in the dialectic of actualized freedom.

IV. Recovering Dignity and the Right of Necessity

The inspiration for Honneth’s emphasis on reciprocal recognition is not merely the dialectical actualization of freedom, but also what he views as the right that subjects have to personal integrity and *human dignity*. Freedom, as such, cannot consist solely of institutional guarantees of intersubjective relationality, but is predicated on the subject’s development of an individuated identity, the self-realization of her aspirations and her standing with others in a multitude of institutionalized and non-institutionalized relational contexts.⁵ As Honneth writes, “the entirety of intersubjective conditions that can be shown to serve as necessary preconditions for individual self-realization . . . [and] the connection between the experience of recognition and one’s relation-to-self stems from the intersubjective structure of personal identity” (Honneth 1995, 73). It is for this reason that asymmetrical recognition precludes the possibility of freedom; recognition requires that the Other who stands in a relation of opposition to me recognizes me to the same degree to which I recognize her. My dignity is undermined in my relationship with the master, we might say, precisely because she does not view me as a subject of equal claims to recognition.

That I require a sense of self-understanding as well as the affirmation of others’ that I *am* a self is clearly outlined in Hegel’s section on Abstract Right. It is in the sphere of Morality that Hegel shifts his focus to actional intent, framing the moral (and accordingly, rational and free) action as that which has in its sight both a subjective and objective understanding of freedom, or, how one’s particular interests are imbricated in the interests of the universal. There is a clear emphasis on rationality as that which ‘universalizes’ the will of all subjects, such that my intentional action be intelligible not only to myself, but to others as well:

The universal quality of an action is the varied *content* of the action in general, reduced to the *simple form* of universality. But the subject, as reflected into itself and hence as a *particular* entity in relation to the particularity of the objective realm, has its own particular content in its end, and this is the soul and determinant of action. The fact that this moment of the *particularity* of the agent is contained and implemented in the action constitutes *subjective freedom* in its more concrete determination, i.e. the *right* of the *subject* to find its *satisfaction* in the action. (PR §121)

More simply, we might say that insofar as my action adheres to the limits of the universal will, my actual intention and the intention others interpret in my action must coalesce, particularly so that I feel not only autonomous but also recognized.

Hegel’s writings on intention are integral to his conception of freedom not merely for the advancement of his dialectic of Spirit, but also for his quasi-Aristotelian reading of *happiness* as the highest value that free agents strive toward in the context of the State.⁶ It is not my particular happiness that I have in mind, however, but the aggregate happiness of all peoples within the political community—in other words, there is both a subjective and objective dimension to the attainment of happiness: my freedom is contoured, we might say, by a shared conception of value within the community of beings. In the context of right—or, existence “which is the existence of the *free will*” (PR §29)—Hegel rearticulates this ‘happiness’ more simply as *welfare*.

Subjectivity, with its *particular* content of *welfare*, is reflected into itself and infinite, and consequently also has reference to the universal, to the will which has being in itself. This [universal] moment, initially posited within this particularity itself, includes *the welfare of others*—or in its complete, but wholly empty determination, the welfare of *all*. (PR §125)

It is through free, self-reflective action itself—action oriented toward those projects which I undertake as a means to a happiness compatible with the common good—that I exist as a particular within the universal.

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Crucially, Hegel concretizes the right to welfare as one which supersedes abstract right, insofar as the loss of life, the “totality of all ends”, would constitute the absolute negation of an individual’s right—and thus, her freedom—altogether. This right to welfare in moments of dire need is aptly called the *right of necessity*. However, Hegel contextualizes this right only in cases “of extreme danger” when “in collision with the rightful property of someone else” as, for example, would be a situation in which one’s life could be “preserved by stealing a loaf” (PR §127). The intention behind such an action that would be otherwise criminal, Hegel believes, is sufficient to justify the criminal action itself. Hegel further specifies that the right of necessity—which can “justify a wrong action”—belongs to one “whose life is in danger” in an immediate context, insofar as “its omission would in turn involve committing [...] the ultimate wrong, namely the total negation of the existence of freedom” (PR §127).

If it is the case that the right of necessity reveals the “contingency of both right and welfare” (PR §128), we might wonder what precisely constitutes the relevant degree of ‘necessity’ for a wrong action to be justified. The *Philosophy of Right* suggests that it is only when one’s *life* is threatened that the right of necessity applies. However, if the ultimate wrong is not only the negation of life but also the negation of *freedom*, then the scope of welfare should extend to cases of asymmetric or withheld *recognition* as well—as applies, perhaps, in the master-slave relation, insofar as the slave must “[take] possession of himself and [become] his own property as distinct from that of others” (PR §57). Indeed, in his *Politics* Aristotle himself notes that, “citizens rebel not only because of inequality of possessions, but also because of *inequality of honor*” (Aristotle 1986, §1266b, p. 52, my emphasis). Examining Hegel’s theory of recognition through his *Encyclopedia*, Häkkinen similarly calls this phenomenon one of *mutual respect*:

What is at issue is not merely attributing the other technical authority in the interpretation and execution of ends set by oneself, but taking her as someone who has an independent viewpoint on ends and commands authority on the norms and principles of co-existence independently of my viewpoint. (Häkkinen 2013, 34)

The asymmetry of self-possession coupled with the asymmetry of mutual recognition lays the groundwork precisely for some form of self-assertive resistance to promote one as having an individuality that demands to be recognized.

If one’s integrity or dignity is constitutive of one’s self-possession, then I suggest that the subject who is unrecognized as a subject—that is, as a person with a right to actualized freedom—may call on the right of necessity to assert her status as a free and autonomous being. In other words, I posit that, under Honneth’s critical social theory, there must be embedded within the right of necessity a *right of resistance* in some relevant sense: insofar as social movements—and here we might take the struggle for women’s suffrage or the Black Lives Matter movement—emerge out of the fight to be recognized (and, as such, attain a level of freedom not presently granted), actions of resistance—such as civil disobedience or, more analogously, destruction of property—seem perfectly justified under the psychosocial reading of recognition that Honneth advances. Indeed, we might argue that asymmetrical recognition can, in certain circumstances, fester into relations of asymmetry that produce an increased threat to one’s *life*; Honneth himself posits his critique as a means of articulating instances of disrespect as sources of “motivation for acts of *political resistance*” (Honneth 1995, 143, emphasis added). It is not enough, in other words, to be granted the means needed for basic sustenance, as Hegel seems to suggest when illustrating the theft of a loaf. What is needed for concrete freedom is a more robust understanding of the self as a subject in possession of a unique individuality which others both recognize and affirm. Accordingly, the lack of this condition of freedom allows the subject the right to resist the space of asymmetry in which she finds herself and assert herself as a subject of *equal value* with equal “*opportunities* to realize [herself] in noncoercive and undistorted relations of reciprocal recognition” (Zurm 2015, 75). More simply, the right of resistance can be employed to assure the safety of *one’s own life* within the State.

The argument for the right of resistance is predicated upon a critical move that Hegel fails to make in the *Philosophy of Right*, and one which Honneth recognizes even in Hegel’s earlier works:

The turn to the philosophy of consciousness allows Hegel to completely lose sight of the idea of an original intersubjectivity of humankind and blocks the way to the completely different solution that would have consisted in making the necessary distinctions between various degrees of personal autonomy within the framework of a theory of intersubjectivity. (Honneth 1995, 30)

Concomitant to the absence of an analysis of social progress at the level of Ethical Life is, I suggest, the absence of *dignity* as integral to concrete, individual freedom and, as such, the extension of the struggle for recognition to the level of the State itself. On Hegel’s account, recognition—which serves as the driving force of individuation and the actualization of Spirit until law is codified—loses its potential as a critical social theory precisely where one would expect it to be especially robust, not merely metaphysically but also politically. And it is the overcoming of disrespect at the level of the State that offers the possibility for reciprocal relations of *solidarity* that Honneth finds lacking in Hegel’s sphere of Ethical Life.

Honneth provides a novel rehabilitation of Hegelian political philosophy by breathing new life into the theory of recognition embedded throughout Hegel’s early works. However, the discussion of the criminal that occupies much of Honneth’s *Struggle for Recognition*—which I hold as the linchpin of a radical rearticulation of recognition theory as social

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struggle—disappears in Honneth's later works, and neither does Honneth illustrate the struggle for recognition as one that might exist between the State and the citizen. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the *rabble* makes no appearance in Honneth's own critical theory. An application of Honneth's critique at the level of the State—which Hegel depicts “on the basis of the positive relationship that socialized subjects have, *not* among each other, but rather with the State” (Honneth 1995, 59)—might help us not only pick up where Honneth leaves off but also offer a new way to address one of the most controversial aspects of the Hegelian State. It is only through the struggle for recognition, after all, that all peoples within the State can ensure the attainment of freedom and thrive in relations of true solidarity with one another.

V. The Rabble's Right to Resist

Under Honneth's reading, Hegel's “sphere of Ethical Life” in the *Philosophy of Right* abandons the previously developed dialectic of recognition in favor of a “drawn-out process of education” (Honneth 2010, 62). Herein, the subject situated in the State is taken for granted as having come into actualized freedom through learning and developing the appropriate intersubjective habits required at the level of the family and of civil society. These relations of recognition, manifested intersubjectively and interpersonally, are what Ikäheimo calls “horizontal” relations of recognition: intersubjective encounters which are mutually constitutive of individuation and the affirmation of subjects who share in the common good. Just as Aristotle's man is inherently a social and political animal who is incapable of living outside of the city—lest he be either man or beast—Hegel's man lives in relations of social interdependence that guarantee not only his individual freedom, but a rational and properly *social and political* freedom that cannot be attained outside of the State.

Both Hegel and Honneth focus almost exclusively on intersubjective relations as they exist *between individual persons*, as these relationships are precisely what drives the development of the individuated self. This, however, precludes any robust analysis of the relationship between civil society and the State, which Ikäheimo suggests stands in a “vertical” relation of recognition which involves the “acknowledgment or acceptance of [the state's] laws and norms, and the institutions that these constitute, as valid or legitimate” (Ikäheimo 2013, 28). As such, the remainder of this analysis concerns the problem of asymmetric recognition not between (groups of) individuals, but rather between social groups and political institutions—or, more simply, the State as the conglomeration of social, economic, and legal institutions—as they manifest as proper social and political struggles for recognition. Much like Honneth does with dignity on the level of interpersonal intersubjectivity (or, horizontal relationality), Jean-Phillippe Deranty and Emmanuel Renault touch on the asymmetry of vertical relationality as deriving from “social contempt,” wherein

it is only when individuals and groups are fighting against the denial of recognition produced by the institutions of social life that their struggle is political and that it really involves political normativity. Conversely, it is only if the theory of recognition is able to explain when institutions produce recognition or denial of recognition that it provides a definition of social justice, and thus, a description of political normativity. (Deranty and Renault 2007, 99)

Accordingly, because the cognitive asymmetry is embedded within the institution-individual relationship, demands for recognition must be addressed “within [the] institutional frameworks” in which non-recognition is systemically embedded. It is for this reason that social and political movements so often address as their target *institutionalized injustices*. In the ladder of vertical relationality, the State towers as the master while those engaging in social struggles clamber at the bottom rung as slaves.

By analyzing Honneth's writings on social struggle in the context of Hegel's right of necessity, I posit that instances of non-recognition on the part of institutions toward particular groups of individuals ignite struggles that evolve into social movements *precisely through these groups' appeal to their right of necessity*. As previously mentioned, historic struggles such as women's suffrage, the Civil Rights Movement, and the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement are exemplary instances of *resistance*, and the mechanisms of disobedience—such as public protests, disruption of traffic, and destruction of property—utilized therein must be justified by Hegel's right of necessity. However, I suggest that this framework of struggle can be suitably applied to the more abstract conflict of *the rabble*, which emerges when

a large mass of people sinks below the level of a certain standard of living—which automatically regulates itself at the level *necessary for a member of the society in question*—that feeling of right, integrity [*Rechtlichkeit*], and honor which comes from supporting oneself by one's own activity and work is *lost* . . . despite an *excess of wealth*, civil society is *not wealthy enough*—i.e. its own distinct resources are not sufficient—to *prevent an excess of poverty and the formation of a rabble*. (§ 244-245, emphasis added)

It is noteworthy that Hegel frames the rabble as an *unavoidable* consequence of the modern, rational state, despite its antithetical existence to the project of rational freedom. That Hegel does not expand on this inevitability or address possible methods of alleviating (even if not eliminating) the rabble problem is curious given the emphasis placed on recognition, welfare, and necessity in preceding sections of the *Philosophy of Right*. Indeed, Allen Wood himself notes that the “recognition of universal freedom [itself] *disappears*” once the individual's freedom has no existence.⁷

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Honneth's critique may provide some insight here, however, if we take into account his reading of Hegel's unrealized theory of recognition: because the rabble emerges only at the level of the State—in the sphere of Ethical Life—and because Honneth holds that Hegel has already abandoned his dialectic of recognition for a theory of objectified Spirit, an analysis of the rabble in the context of recognitive struggle is disregarded after the newfound emphasis Hegel places on education in this third sphere. As such, readers of the *Philosophy of Right* are left with the rabble as an irrational fissure in the otherwise holistic vision of the rational State that Hegel provides.

There are two perspectives by which the rabble is disrespected: on the one hand, it lacks the economic resources needed for proper social and political flourishing; on the other, it stands in a relation of contempt against the rest of the social body, resentful of its lot in the lottery of actualized freedom. In the context of the former, then, the rabble is incapable of attaining freedom by benefiting and participating in the common good, and in the latter it is excluded from relations of solidarity—which are not localized to particular social groups but require opportunities for the development of self-esteem equal to “others in the wider society” (Zum 2015, 43)—that are meant to exemplify recognitive relationality in the sphere of Ethical Life. Lacking both welfare and dignity, then, it is patently clear that the rabble can, on a critical social reading of Hegel's view, appeal to a right of resistance as a derivative of the right of necessity.

Frank Ruda, in his many writings on Hegel's rabble, also appeals to Hegel's right of necessity as implicitly demonstrating that “an individual who is part of the rabble and suffers injustice does indeed have a right to claim his or her right and that, if it is refused to him or her, he or she is entitled to draw certain practical conclusions from this” (Ruda 2017, 171). Ruda characterizes the “right to have rights” in such instances as “a right of revolution,” which scholars of Hegel definitively disavow as a possibility within the State. However, Ruda qualifies this revolutionary right as “a right to transform the present state fundamentally into a new and better one” (Ruda 2017, 171), while *still working within the framework of the state's positive constitution*: “it is not, and cannot be, to my mind a right to abolish or fundamentally transform all coordinates of right” (Ruda 2017, 172). Given the ambiguity of “revolution” as Ruda himself utilizes the term, I offer “resistance” as encompassing the same capacity for internal transformation, in which, following Honneth's own words, “legal definitions would have to change, other forms of political representation would have to be established, and material redistribution carried out for new modes of generalized recognition to be established.” (Honneth 2007, 345). Accordingly, resistance does not imply a total *failure* of institutions that necessitates abolition and reconstruction, but rather works to drive the ever-moving dialectic of freedom to realize a more rational and truly universal State.

It should finally be noted that Michael Thompson has addressed the problem of the rabble in his anti-capitalist framing of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Herein, Thompson identifies a right of “nonobligation” or “dissent” embedded in Hegel's right of necessity, which emerges in spaces of “deficient modernity,” or, in spaces which challenge the morality and rationality of the universal, common good. In modern capitalist societies, Thompson writes, “the rational will be at odds with the institutions, values, and practices that do not aim at the universal” (Thompson 2015, 122), and thus generates a duty to ‘correct’ these institutional injustices by means of dissent. Thompson's understanding of dissent is in many ways analogous to the right of resistance that I have laid out in this paper, although Thompson's contextualization is distinctly contemporary while the right of resistance is one that one can find imbued in Hegel's own theory of recognition. In both instances, nonetheless,

it is not simply those that are not served by the economic system—that is, the poor, the rabble (*Pöbel*)—that ought to dissent from these institutions and practices, but anyone who can grasp that they live in a world where only their particularity and the particularity of others is given primacy and where the institutions and practices of the community are prevented from realizing the universal, the common interests of the community. (Thompson 2015, 127)

For both Thompson and myself, it is universal freedom itself, manifested as the rational, common good, which calls on a right of resistance in times of social, political, and economic injustice. Had Hegel extended his theory of recognition into the sphere of Ethical Life, as Honneth suggests, he, too, may have been able to provide a solution to the problem of the rabble fully consistent with the rational organization of his modern State.

VI. Conclusion

I've offered in this analysis what I hope can serve as a new lens through which to consider Hegel's infamous ‘rabble problem’. By integrating Axel Honneth's reading of recognition in Hegel's early works with a view to social movements and political struggles, I propose a rearticulation of Hegel's *right of necessity* as one which, paradoxically, recognizes the *right of the unrecognized to resist*. The theory of resistance which I have presented here certainly confronts contemporary obstacles which merit brief discussion. The aims of antifascist and anarchist movements, for example, do not fit neatly within the struggle of individual recognition provided here. Rather, although he himself would resist this characterization, Honneth's theory of recognition—and that which serves as the foundation of my conceptualization of the right of resistance—applies more appropriately to struggles of *identity politics*, whether racial, socioeconomic, gender-oriented, sexual, etc. in nature. Nonetheless, because Hegel is committed to the sustenance of the State, it is perhaps unproblematic that the right of resistance falls outside of the purview of anarchist or antifascist movements which strive toward a complete restructuring of the State itself.

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Outside of merely Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, an identity politics-driven theory of justified resistance may allow us novel ways of interpreting many of today's struggles (such as the Meskwaki tribe's opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline construction) as well as challenge our approach to solving complex problems of injustice (such as immigration restrictions justified on the grounds of national security). "[T]here are two types of laws," Martin Luther King Jr. famously penned: "[T]here are just laws, and there are unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that 'An unjust law is no law at all.'" (MLK 1986, 293). The justification of criminal action in the name of justice is a cornerstone of social, political, and economic progress, and the continued sociocultural and legal criminalization of activists working toward the common good itself undermines the Spirit of the State. Perhaps if Hegel had himself seen the urgency of not only interpersonal but also institutional recognition, he would agree.

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¹ Herein Hegel defines *crime* as "the initial use of coercion, as force employed by a free agent in such a way as to infringe the existence [*Dasein*] of freedom in its *concrete* sense—i.e. to infringe right as [universal] right" (see Hegel 1991, 121).

² Indeed, it is for this reason that hyper-reflection engenders an endless cycle of moral deliberation that leads, ultimately, to total social paralysis—"indeterminacy"—and the death of the State.

³ See PR §141. Honneth expands on this mutual necessity by reframing the asymmetric development of morality over right or right over morality as generative of a *social pathology*. See Honneth 2010.

⁴ It should be noted that Honneth himself never addresses the master-slave dialectic in his own analysis of recognition, least of all to draw parallels therefrom to his discussion of criminality. Heikki Ikäheimo, too, is careful to note that Hegel never posits the master-slave relationship as "a correct construal of what mutual recognition that fully realizes concrete freedom actually is" (Ikäheimo 2013, 32). Nevertheless, conceptually speaking the master-slave model offers an intersubjective model of identity-constitution that ultimately "emphasizes the need for universal recognition, the fact that in order to be genuinely recognized *I must recognize the other as my equal*" (Wynne 2000, 5). It is in the State that this universal recognition is to be made actual, formalized through the sedimentation of law which has "its reality and support in something itself universal" (Honneth 1995, 21).

⁵ Ikäheimo similarly calls these two variations of recognition "*purely intersubjective recognition and institutionally mediated [...]* recognition." See Ikäheimo 2013, 17-18.

⁶ The relationship between "happiness" and "freedom" is crucial here, as I do not mean to suggest that Hegel held 'happiness' to a hierarchically prior position of significance over 'freedom'. Freedom for Hegel, is *the* ultimate end toward which human beings strive, but is intimately inbricated in our quotidian understanding of "happiness" as that which is engendered by self-actualization. As such, although we may not articulate "freedom" as our ultimate end, our attainment of happiness is itself a happiness that can be found only within a position of concrete freedom. Aristotle's own notion of happiness—*Eudaimonia*, or human flourishing—is similarly situated socially and politically, insofar as it is only through political associations of relative freedom, buttressed by the mutual support exchanged therein, that individuals can truly flourish.

⁷ See notes to §244, at p. 453, emphasis added. It should also be noted that for Hegel, not everyone living below a particular standard of living is automatically a member of the rabble—the rabble emerges as such if and when its members adopt a particular contemptuous *disposition* (i.e. against the wealthy, the institutions, the State, etc.).

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