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# Hegel's Gesture Towards Radical Cosmopolitanism

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*This is a preliminary argument of a much larger research project inquiring into the relation between Hegel's philosophical system and the project of emancipation in Critical International Relations Theory. Specifically, the paper examines how Hegel's theory of recognition gestures towards a form of radical cosmopolitanism in world politics to ensure the conditions of rational freedom for all humankind. Much of the paper is a ground-clearing exercise defining what is 'living' in Hegel's thought for emancipatory approaches in world politics, to borrow from Croce's now famous question. It focuses on Hegel's unique concept of freedom which places recognition as central in the formation of self-consciousness and therefore as a key determinant in the conditions necessary for human freedom to emerge in political community. While further research is needed to ascertain the precise relationship between Hegel's recognition theoretic, emancipation and cosmopolitanism, it is contended that the intersubjective basis of Hegel's concept of freedom through recognition necessitates some form of radical cosmopolitanism that ensures successful processes of recognition between all peoples, the precise institutional form of which remains unspecified.*

## **Introduction**

The title of this paper may raise many questioning glances as Hegel is typically viewed in IR theory as justifying communitarian and/or statist arguments diametrically opposed to forms of cosmopolitanism, radical or otherwise. And passages from the *Philosophy of Right* clearly establish Hegel's proclivity toward the ideal *Staat* over all other forms of political community, past or imagined, as does his virulent condemnation of the Kantian notion of a perpetual peace seem to forego any possibility for the emergence of cosmopolitan community beyond the confines of the state. However, there exists an immanent potential in Hegel's recognition theoretic for the advancement of emancipation in world politics and it is contended here that if one follows the dialectic of recognition established primarily in the *Phenomenology* to its logical trajectory, that what Hegel's thought ultimately gestures towards – even though Hegel was himself

largely unreflective of this potential – is a justification for some kind of radical cosmopolitanism that ensures processes of recognition amongst all peoples of the earth. Processes of recognition must necessarily transcend the state in both its territorial and cultural boundedness, so as to secure genuine patterns of mutual recognition in world politics between *all* persons. If it is only with full recognition that we can be “at home with oneself in one’s other,” (Hegel 1975, § 24; Baynes, 2002, p. 1) then processes of recognition cannot terminate at the border, nor be allowed to be distorted through unnecessary cultural limitations on otherness. Both outcomes would prevent genuine forms of recognition from emerging and would thus infract upon Hegel’s ideal conception of freedom which is reliant on mutual intersubjective engagements between self and other.

### **Refocusing Hegel on the recognition theoretic**

It is the humanism of the Young Hegel that is argued to be of key benefit for emancipatory politics<sup>2</sup> and many have juxtaposed, quite rightly, Hegel’s radicalism in the *Realphilosophie* and his “quietism” in the *Philosophy of Right* (Avineri, 1971, pp. 97-109). In this paper, what is ‘living’ in Hegel, to borrow from Croce, is his unique dialectical conception of rational freedom and the struggle for recognition this entails (Croce, 1966), while fully acknowledging the great danger in revising Hegel for one’s own interests, or re-interpreting Hegel by contemporary standards. Ottman has shown how varying political persuasions of the past have failed to adopt Hegel as an ally (Ottmann, 1996, 53ff). Those accounts that attempt to emphasise the progressive and emancipatory aspects of Hegel’s work suffer from the damage done by his unwarranted subsumption by fascistic writers and those one-sided accounts that focus only on his comments on the state (Dallmayr, 1991, p. 333 citing Gentile, 1966; Hobhouse, 1999, p. 6; Popper, 1966, p. 256). Such approaches do not engage fully with the problem that animated Hegel’s concern, namely, the attempt to reconcile the subject and the universal in a social theory that placed human freedom as its central concern. In distinction to these limited accounts, this paper explores key aspects of Hegel’s complex understanding of freedom including the rational will, particularity and the intersubjective basis of human freedom. It then intimates the problems that this conception of freedom encounters within Hegel’s political theory and its reliance on the potentially totalising notion of *Sittlichkeit*, and argues that only through radical cosmopolitan processes of recognition that move beyond any bounded form of ethical life, could ensure the conditions necessary for rational freedom to emerge.

It is common for IR theory to simply dismiss Hegel by focusing on his Eurocentricism, unilinear mode of historical development, or patriarchy,<sup>3</sup> and the problematic aspects of his political programme including the sharp division of classes into estates, his favour of monarchical government, his dismissal of democracy

(Pelczynski, 1971) and even Hegel's alleged 'glorification' of war.<sup>4</sup> While we should not ignore the problems associated with Hegel's disparaging of Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, his condemnation of Frie's appeal for political participation, and his gendered familial roles (Cohen, 1932, p. 296), some of the oft-heard criticisms are exaggerated and have ossified to become the so-called "myths and legends" of Hegel which have little substantive basis in his *actual* thought.<sup>5</sup> As such, many have sought to save Hegelian insights by disentangling them from the skeins of his metaphysics and theodicy (Smith, 1989, p. 15), a revision which I follow. Similarly, I continue contemporary trends in abandoning Hegel's philosophy of history, tainted as it is by its unswerving teleology, and following Feuerbach's observation that Hegel's doctrine of spirit is sheer "rational mysticism" (Fuerbach, 1983, pp. 121-122), omit references to Absolute Spirit (*Geist*). Instead of the *Phenomenology* signifying the historical movement of Spirit towards self-determination, it is possible to *transpose* this as a question of human emancipation towards a genuine form of self-autonomy, a humanist interpretation that considers Hegel's "Absolute" as humankind's "own nature" rather than *Geist*.<sup>6</sup> This dismissal of *Geist* however, does not mean the study is no longer sufficiently Hegelian to warrant the title because for Hegel the realm of Spirit (Mind) presupposed a teleology immanent in the free-will of human beings, a movement that pervades all reality through the progress of history and the development of human freedom (Honneth, 2000, p. 18). In this way, human history is a dialectical process containing the potentiality for expanding the conditions of mutual recognition and, ultimately, the emancipation of humankind without the need to retreat to the metaphysical qualities of *Geist* in order to sustain it. As such, this paper takes the "indirect" approach as advocated by Honneth and others to reactualise Hegel's work through a "productive understanding of its intention and basic structure" (*ibid*) without necessarily calling up the state, spirit, or format of the *Logic*. (Riedel, 1971, p. 141)

Yet is it possible to strip Hegel of his metaphysical baggage to focus on the connection he makes between identity and recognition and then extend this from the state level to some cosmopolitan society?<sup>7</sup> In *Suffering From Indeterminacy*, the productive method employed by Honneth makes such an approach possible by avoiding reconstructing the whole of Hegel's philosophical system to instead trace the immanent movements in Hegel's thought that can be channeled towards a modern theory of emancipation (Honneth, 2000, pp. 7-17). Honneth proceeds from intersubjectivist premises making central the moral category of recognition that provides formal criteria through which progressive and regressive modes of social relations can be understood. The dialectical account is confirmed by the concept of struggle in moral structures which pattern intersubjective relations and the way socially acting subjects advance claims for recognition, thus opening the potential – not inevitability – for the "progressive expansion" of such attitudes of recognition (Weber forthcoming 2009, p. 18). This intersubjective approach takes social-relations as possessing and embodying

causal power in the dialectical processes of social change without necessitating a reversion to Hegelian metaphysics. In so doing, it removes any need to return to Hegel's problematic philosophy of history that saw dialectical change largely in reference to the unfolding of *Geist* to the Absolute. Rather, it re-grounds the dialectic of social life in the possibility of historically realizable conditions of recognition without buying into the teleology that tends to accompany variants of Hegel's objective and idealist dialectic (Frost, 1996, pp. 143-149).

Of course, other directions could be taken when abandoning Hegelian metaphysics, directions that may, or may not, end up being recognisable as Hegelian depending on one's viewpoint. Such vaunted alternatives include the communitarian commitment to the state and/or community locales (*ibid*), or to extend Hegel's understanding of civil society to the transnational sphere,<sup>8</sup> or to emphasise the role of Hegel's ideal *Staat* in order to re-cast him as a progenitor of classical realism.<sup>9</sup> What such approaches all lose sight of, however, is the centrality of recognition in Hegel's thought and how satisfactory sublation of the contradiction that arises when 'a self-conscious confronts another self-conscious' (Hegel, 1977, §177), (that is, the originary encounter between two selves that sets-off the struggle for recognition), gestures towards processes of mutual recognition not only within the state but in the cosmopolitan sphere.

Many accounts of Hegel in IR theory focus solely on passages in the third part of the *Philosophy of Right* (on the state) and fail to read these alongside, and through, his recognition theoretic. What typically follow are one-sided legal positivist interpretations that valorize the institutions of the state because such analysis has been abstracted from the whole of Hegel's ontological system, with little consideration of the recognition theoretic. Unfortunately, such statist readings of Hegel continue to abound in IR theory, through which Hegel has come to be seen as emblematic of the *problem* of IR because of his alleged statism.<sup>10</sup> While Knox has demonstrated that the ideal of Hegel's rational state has nothing to do with the Prussian state of his time,<sup>11</sup> much less with Hitler's Germany, the majority of IR scholarship seem to echo Popper's untempered criticism of Hegel as being the forerunner of Nazism.<sup>12</sup> Under this guise, Hegel is indicted as an enemy of the "open society" because he is supposed to have ultimately subordinated individuals as agents to the higher collectivity under a procrustean *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life). Yet the polemics of Popper (1966, p. 60) or Hobhouse (1999, p. 137), when read against Hegel's actual thought, seem dramatically overstated and become "almost meaninglessly silly", to borrow Mure's expression (1984, p. 360). The portrayal of Hegelianism as a totalizing metaphysics that submerges all forms of otherness neglects Hegel's resolute defence of what he referred to as the 'freedom of particularity'. In certain passages Hegel seems to privilege identity and ethical life while truncating the dialectical tension between sameness and otherness, and yet the issue is far more subtle and nuanced than the blanket charge of totalisation conveys. As we shall see, part of the problem lies in Hegel's assumption that the recognitive process can be

successfully sublated within the state, an assumption that does reduce the unique otherness of those beyond state-borders and prevents mutual recognition from becoming actualisable in world politics.

None of this should be taken as an attempt to pry away recognition theory from its embeddedness in Hegelian thought, nor to remove the Master/Slave dialectic out of Hegel's ontological system. Although Hegel elucidates the recognition theoretic throughout this work (Hegel, 1977, §425-426; Hegel, 1971, section IV; Hegel, 1969, §57; Hegel, 1931, pp. 200-202; Armstrong, 1966, pp. 780-802; Mefford, 1982), the argument focuses on the phenomenological necessity of mutual recognition for the establishment of rational-freedom as outlined primarily in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. However, it does move decidedly away from, and contests, the view espoused by Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right* that left the process recognition bounded – and therefore unfulfilled – in the state. The problem is most visible where Hegel affirmed humankind's "unfitness for slavery" not only as a mere 'ought to be' but then reduces this idea of freedom as "genuinely actual *only as the state*" (emphasis added, Hegel, 1969, §57). Here, recognition processes become bounded by the state as emblematic of Hegel's ideal form of ethical community, with distortions necessarily arising by the fact that recognition between members of different states occurs through the refraction of the state lens. The other, the outsider, the non-citizen is always misrecognised by the fact that they are not mutually recognizable as an insider, a fellow citizen. What this paper argues is the need to reframe recognition processes beyond the state so that the potential for sublation of the contradiction between insider/outsider, citizen/non-citizen, is placed on a trajectory that is far more efficacious; one that does not rely problematically on a bounded institution but can extend successful recognition processes into the cosmopolitan sphere. Arguably, it is only with such a move that could insure the conditions necessary for rational freedom to occur. Whether such an argument is still sufficiently imbued with enough 'Hegelianism' to still be called 'Hegelian' is a moot question for the argument is concerned with tracing the potential in Hegel for emancipatory thought via the principle of mutual recognition, and not in establishing loyalties to particular readings of Hegel.

Nor should this be seen as an attempt to carve up Hegel into discrete pieces, using the *Phenomenology* to decompose the *Philosophy of Right*. It seems quite obvious to note that what a theorist focuses on in Hegel's philosophical system ultimately leads to distinct outcomes. As noted by Cochrane, if one draws on the *Philosophy of Right*, such approaches tend to reveal the state as a realization of the ethical ideal; those that draw on the *Philosophy of History* tend to emphasise humankind's capacity for self-determination beyond the state.<sup>13</sup> In distinction, this paper has drawn on Hegel's recognition theoretic to reveal how state-based forms of recognition cannot offer the means to successfully sublimate the contradiction that arises when two selves, from different states, encounter each other. Those accounts that focus on the recognition

theoretic are not limited by being transfixed on particular writings of Hegel, for this idea appears in various degrees in all of Hegel's major works. But before I go on to outline the argument for cosmopolitan processes of recognition, we must first see how mutual recognition serves as a central condition for the emergence of human freedom in Hegel's system.

### **Hegel's conception of freedom through recognition**

While Hegel's notion of freedom is complex and multilayered, I must defer an in-depth discussion of its elements and offer here only an outline of its key components. Freedom for Hegel is subjective in that it refers to the "I", the ego of pure self-consciousness, or somewhat more technically, what Hegel refers to as the 'being-in-and-for itself. Hegel sought to synthesise the negative freedom of modern liberalism and the positive freedom of ancient republican thought, a sublation between particular freedom of the individual and ethical community life (K. H. Ilting cited in Arato, 1991, p. 317). This differs markedly from a *negative* conception of freedom – freedom *from* constraint (Berlin, 1969) – and embodies the *positive* idea of freedom as self-direction of the "real" (rational) self, or as Hegel writes, a "being-with-itself", "autonomous and self-sufficient" (Hegel, 1988, pp. 20-30). Freedom in this Hegelian sense must be *rational* as it requires not merely the absence of impediments to action but also a genuine self-awareness (Smith, 1987, p. 114). The free-will must be externalized and objectified by the self to be rational – we are only free when we *can* and *do* choose what we would will *if* our will itself were truly free, or as Hegel cryptically expressed it; "free is the will *that wills the free will*" (Hegel, 1991, § 27). From Hegel's viewpoint, actions are not the exercise of a genuinely free-will if the desired end is held to be a low ideal either in terms of moral goodness or the quality of the experience to be attained (Doyle, 1894, pp. 656-671). So in distinction to Rousseau's idea of free-will as the individual's will of consciousness, Hegel sought the *rational-will*, what he defined as "the will's rationality in and for itself." (Hegel, 1991, § 258) Consequently, following Pinkard (1986, p. 210), I regard the *Philosophy of Right* as Hegel's own dialectical exposition of what the ontological and institutional conditions for such a conception of freedom would be.<sup>14</sup> And it is in this concept of *Right* that Hegel advances, that we come closest to identifying the factors inherent to Hegel's notion of emancipation, including *abstract right* which is the expression of immediate will, *morality* as the will reflected into itself (conscience) and *ethics* as a synthesis of these two stages. Ethics is therefore the highest possible expression of the rational-will for Hegel, where, in the institutions of the family, civil society and the state, "true liberty" finds its "purpose in a universal content" (Hegel, 1971, § 469).

While the ultimate goal for Hegel's rational-freedom was to be self-determining and independent, this subjective notion of freedom also includes the peculiarly Hegelian idea of a social situation where the self makes sense of the whole



(including all others) and expresses it in *itself*;<sup>15</sup> as Hegel affirmed, “the proper and true ground upon which freedom is existent” is the “relation of will to will” (Hegel, 1991, § 71). He elsewhere defines freedom as “to be with oneself, in the other” (Hegel, 1970, Vol. 8, § 24A) and as such, Hegel’s notion of freedom is, above all, intersubjective. There are many aspects to this intersubjectivist account of human freedom which are beyond the limits of this paper to explore. However, what needs to be emphasized is how intersubjectivity relates to the Hegelian concept of *Sittlichkeit* and mutual recognition, and ultimately how Hegel believes this helps establish a rational, free-will within community.

Hegel does not therefore discard the freedom of particularity but rather attempts to sublimate it to the universal through *Sittlichkeit* and his concern for mutual recognition. Hegel desired to make social relations based on the education (*Bildung*) of the person to the commonwealth or the universal interest, and he did so to preserve the particularity of the individual while being within, and identifying with, their community in order to give objectivity to the content of free-will. Hegel thought that it was only in ethical life that individuals could find determinacy for moral actions. For Hegel, individuals will experience this transition from the mere freedom of particularity to ethical life as “liberation” for it overcomes the agonising emptiness of the moral standpoint, the narrow-mindedness of self-interest and the “lack of determinacy” in subjectivity (Hegel, 1991, § 149). That is, Hegel moved to the universalism of ethical life in community to make moral life genuinely liveable (Hegel, 1977, § 347-358) and to procure a universal basis for moral conduct through something general or *Sitten* (custom).<sup>16</sup>

*Sittlichkeit* reflects *ēthos* (custom, way of life) and *ēthikos* (ethical) and is regarded by Hegel as a means to restore humankind to a unified condition, involving the sublation of the private/public duality in modern society (Gallagher, 1987, p. 168 citing Hegel, 1991, § 151). *Sittlichkeit* has thus often been described as the *aufhebung*, the dialectical “abrogating sublimation”, of abstract individualism and Kantian morality.<sup>17</sup> More specifically, Hegel attempted to unite the realms of the legality of positive right and the morality of the self “in a higher concept” articulated in the institutions of the family, civil society and the state.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, we can see that Hegel did not discard the freedom of particularity but sought sublation to the universal through *Sittlichkeit*. We must note that Hegel is here talking about the *Ideal* form of the state that embodies the balance between the subject and the social, and to not mistake it for any actual, or existent state. This *Ideal* state for Hegel is considered the genuine differentiated unity of the particular and the universal and is intended not as a totalitarian universal that sits over and against the members of society (as some IR theorists are fond of assuming) but rather is to exist in, and through, them. The question is not Hegel’s *intention* in making the move to ethical life I believe, but how successful his political theory is in creating the conditions of balance between sociality *and* particularity necessary to realise the

“actuality of the ethical idea.” (Hegel, 1991, § 257, 258) And in assessing this question we must interrogate the patterns of recognition within Hegel’s ideal of political community, the state, and expose the limitations it places on recognition between all humankind, rather than focusing on the recognition it secures between citizens alone.

Hegel’s *Ideal of Sittlichkeit* is closely paralleled with the mode of recognition between self and other within it. Hegel’s conception of freedom involves a radical self-other relation – an expressive form of freedom through mutual recognition – which is developed in the Master/Slave section of the *Phenomenology* (Pippin, 2005). Here, Hegel attempts to generate normative claims on ethico-political practice through the anthropological need of the human species for recognition. The dialectic of mutual recognition presupposes that there is an immanent need within us all to be recognized by, and to recognise others, as mutually, free beings. Freedom requires distinct forms of “recognition” embedded in social institutions and practices. Some have called this state of self-consciousness and socially-mediated self-reflection as a rational ‘self-and-other-relation’ and have identified this as the foundation of Hegel’s concept of freedom – a view which I endorse (Pippin, 2000). In this determination, Hegel provides a social theory of freedom that maintains that one cannot be free *alone*. Freedom therefore requires a very specific type of community, an expansive and inclusive one, one that possesses and secures very distinct processes of recognition.

### **The repression of subjectivity and intersubjectivity**

Yet despite Hegel’s insights into the freedom of particularity and the basis of freedom in intersubjective modes of recognition, Hegel represses both subjectivity and intersubjectivity in his political theory. While Hegel intends the movement from subjective freedom to ethical life and the state as a sublation between the subject and community, the problem surfaces when Hegel argues that “the life of a free nation [is] the real objective ethical order (*Sittlichkeit*)” through “the totality of the customs and laws of a particular people” (Hegel, 1971, p. 202). Hegel’s objective idealism here culminates in the “absolute ethical totality” of the community, where living in accordance with “customs” denotes a relationship of subordination between the ethical totality and the individual. The problem is that custom forms a type of noetic arrest (arrest of the mind) for the individual in that they conform to it without the real possibility for rational reflection on its content. Such identification of the subject to *Sittlichkeit* would seem to infringe on the standard of rationality that is fundamental to Hegel’s conception of freedom. Hegel’s dual commitments to both a rational-freedom of the individual and to the ethical objectivity of custom seem mutually exclusive and, in the end, Hegel represses subjectivity in favour of the universal.

Similarly, just as Hegel’s notion of *Sittlichkeit* seems to repress subjectivity, it has also been argued by Theunissen, Habermas and Pippin amongst others, that Hegel

represses intersubjectivity in his theory of recognition and the movement to *Sittlichkeit*. Theunissen (1991, pp. 15-17) perceives an identitarian pull in this movement to *Sittlichkeit*, in that the individual "I" is "grasped as a *universal* person in which *all* are identical." It is Theunissen's argument that Hegel's conception and emphasis on the individual will causes a loss of intersubjectivity in his theory of ethical life because it represses social relations from the foundation of ethical life by personalising ethical substance. For Theunissen, the Other is merely something mediate to the self in Hegel's political thought. Stemming from a similar analysis, Marcuse alleged that Hegel's concept of freedom is of the person who "remains solely with himself", who appropriates all externality and by implication is therefore atomized (Marcuse, 1973, p. 118). This moves the conception of freedom as inherently intersubjective (where freedom means being-with-oneself-in-the-other) to freedom as pure *being-with-oneself* where the other is all the more perceived as an object, not a natural thing (Theunissen, 1991, pp. 15-17). This problem is also identified by Honneth who argues that Hegel could have placed recognition into the constitution of ethical community to create a "form of interaction in which each person, in his or her individual particularity, could reckon with a feeling of recognition." Instead, Honneth (1995, pp. 58-59) finds that it is the cultural customs of an authoritarian type that unexpectedly take on the role that should have been played by specific and highly demanding forms of mutual recognition.

### **The gesture towards radical cosmopolitanism**

One partial solution to the potential domination of *Sittlichkeit* which threatens to subsume the freedom of particularity, is to insist on the normative capacity of the subject to freely judge the conditions of ethical life. To insure that the identity between the subject and ethical life is non-heteronomous would necessitate a form of reflection on the content of ethical life to mediate the 'I' with the 'We'. Hegel's *Ideal* of rational-freedom would prescribe that the individual must be a *co-participant* in, and not identical to, the ethical institutions of social life. As such, the lofty heights of Hegel's freedom of "self-determining universality" can only be properly reached through "the rational high road" (Hegel, 1970, Vol. 7, § 21, 15Z); the critical reflective capacity of individuals themselves. The agent must sustain a capacity for reflective assessment, an ability to step back from any identity or formation of will, and decide whether they endorse specific features of ethical life. The limitations of this putative solution however, is that it leads directly back into the problems of the philosophy of the subject which confuses the agency/structure relation and fails to explain how – and under what conditions – such critical subjectivity could develop.

A more substantive solution, and one favoured in this paper, relates to the possibility for expanding the processes of recognition in the cosmopolitan sphere. Following the pioneering work of Andrew Linklater and also R.B.J. Walker, it is my

argument that it is precisely the tension created by the division between ‘men’ and ‘citizens’ (Linklater, 1982), or the exclusionary nature of the ‘insider/outsider’ dualism (Walker, 1992) and the distortion of recognition these conditions create, that are the underlying sources of dialectical tension in world politics today. It is this tension that calls for a reinvention of recognition theory towards the cosmopolitan sphere. As we have seen, in social theory and political philosophy, Hegel has been seen to repress both subjectivity and intersubjectivity in his formation of *Sittlichkeit* and the state, but it is my argument that he also represses the process of recognition internationally by limiting it to an endogenous feature within particular, isolated, state communities and thus fails to extend its liberating potential properly to the cosmopolitan sphere. Hegel fails to acknowledge that the dialectic of recognition gestures far beyond the boundedness of ethical life in the state, or any other form of community that seeks to delimit recognition. By confining recognition to a particular community means that the Other beyond its border would remain either misrecognised through distorted representations of the other, or would remain unrecognised altogether. To either ignore such others, or attempt direct subjugation of such others, are equally possible outcomes of the type of recognition processes that are refracted through the state. The interpretation of the Master/Slave dialectic would suggest that just as the master’s misrecognition of the slave meant they could find no mutuality to reflect their own self-conscious freedom, so too would unnecessary distortions arise in the recognition between the ‘citizen’ and the other as an ‘outsider’. Such recognitive processes do not sublimate the contradiction inherent to the encounter between citizen/non-citizen, insider/outsider, but instead replace them with other inherently unstable forms; social-relations replete with new but nevertheless similar contradictions that emanate from the lack of mutual recognition in the previous movement.

If successful recognition is necessary for individual freedom so that the ‘I’ can find ‘one’s self, in one’s other’, the boundedness of the state, and the forced separation between peoples that it implies, cannot create the conditions necessary for this genuine mutual recognition to emerge. Ultimately, recognition processes encapsulated by the state cannot result in the establishment of mutual recognition in which free persons recognize others, and are recognised by others, as mutually free-beings. This then raises the question: what form of recognition processes are adequate for mutual recognition to emerge? What may appear most unsatisfactory is that at this stage we can only speculate as to what form is necessitated by Hegel’s recognition theoretic, a question that needs far more length and breadth of discussion. However, it would be pertinent here to point out that this does not necessitate the creation of some universal *form* of recognition in some supra-world state, but rather as arguing that processes of recognition must be engaged with in the transnational public sphere and in global civil society so that recognition is no longer confined to relations between fellow citizens alone but extends to include all *others* genuinely and mutually. As such, the problem is

not that the subject remains within themselves in Hegel's *Ideal* of rational-freedom – this is essential for the preservation of subjectivity and the exercise of particular freedom. Rather, the question is how well Hegel establishes with subjectivity the conditions of mutual recognition in order to ensure that by remaining in the self, that at the same time, the subject recognises the mutual other in world politics. The answer to this question, I contend, could only be achieved by some radical cosmopolitan process of recognition – and I use the term *radical* here to denote that such recognition processes would have to move beyond existing multilateral frameworks and their limited institutionalised patterns of recognition.

Such an argument, though far from being extensively made in the vast literature on Hegel, is nevertheless plausible and can be derived from Hegel's discussion of the "law of peoples" (*Völkerrecht*). Buchwalter has proffered an analysis of Hegel's discussion of the "law of peoples" as a component of *Recht* that challenges the widespread belief that Hegel offers no support for a collective identity at the global level. Buchwalter (2007, p. 155; Hegel 1975, p. 123ff) acknowledges the realism that pervades Hegel's account of IR but suggests that it is not exhaustive in that Hegel's notion of *Ausserstaatrecht* ('external public law,' typically mistranslated as 'international law') contains both interstate law (*Staatenrecht*) and the law of peoples (*Völkerrecht*). While this does not equate to cosmopolitan law *per se*, it does re-focus Hegelian thought on peoples rather than states, and less on legal-political terms than on the substantive relations of peoples that could accommodate structures of cooperation and interdependency.<sup>19</sup> This constitutes a move away from a Hegelianism that is preoccupied with state sovereignty, to one concerned with world culture. Buchwalter argues that this focus on cultural identity is not meant to champion a people's "irreducible uniqueness" (as in Herder's or, later, Taylor's account) but is the means by which Hegel advances a notion of global interdependency, one that culminates in a global commonality – a "universal identity" (*allgemeine Identität*) (Hegel, 1991, §331) – that is inconceivable in those accounts that focus solely on the state. While Herder and Taylor suggest cultural identity as irreducible, thus leading to communitarianism as separatism or "enclavism", Hegel's emphasis on recognition challenges any particular community's claim to self-sufficiency (Buchwalter, 2007, p. 158). That is, Hegel's understanding of the development of cultural identity parallels the idea of the development of self-consciousness, enabling Buchwalter to construe the interactions of peoples in terms of reciprocal recognition (*ibid*, p. 156). The global commitment to right that follows is seen as a commitment to Kantian cosmopolitanism rather than Hobbesian statism but is not derived from abstract moralism as per *Perpetual Peace* but through the necessary conditions for cultural identity (or self-consciousness), namely, mutual recognition.

In this reading, Hegel offers a positive model of identity instituted by freedom and culture that is inclusive of difference. Buchwalter argues that although Hegel

rejected any form of global governance, a global cultural unity that includes “a plural and even ‘hybrid’ dimension” is inherent to the *Philosophy of Right* (ibid, p. 166), in which the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) is central. Self-consciousness sustains itself through its particularity and establishes its identity “in the awareness of unity as sustained throughout difference”, that is, the self “is properly known to itself only to the degree that it finds itself in the consciousness of an other”.<sup>20</sup> Buchwalter asserts that national identity, no less than individual identity, depends on processes of mutual recognition; just as recognition of another self-consciousness validates the identity of selfhood, Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of History* that through “the relationship of nations to other nations” that a people is able “to perceive itself... and to have itself as its own object” (Hegel, 1975, p. 101). The world’s peoples are not atomised and self-referential, just like human-beings they require an intersubjective basis for their own freedom to emerge. Hegel’s identification of cultural self-consciousness requires recognition from others not just for the formation of identity but because identity depends on incorporating diverse conceptions of self and other. It is only one small step to expand this idea from one concerned with the unique peoples of the earth as cultural entities, to a cosmopolitanism that insures that similar processes of recognition occur between different individuals themselves.

## **Conclusion**

For some, the argument above may fail to address the critique that many level at Hegel’s recognition theoretic, namely, that recognition may be necessary but also impossible, that the idea of human freedom that Hegel aspires toward is actually a paradox.<sup>21</sup> While this is a fundamental debate, it extends beyond the bounds of this essay which was concerned with overcoming approaches to recognition that remain bounded by the state. As has been argued, recognition processes bounded by the state would issue in forms far below the ideal of mutuality required for Hegel’s ideal of rational freedom to emerge. Recognition processes would be refracted, distorted and therefore limited. They would not sublimate the contradiction that arises in the encounter between two selves but replace them. That is, the dialectical movement to mutual recognition necessitates temporally specific sublation but if such sublation occurs through states rather than peoples, then this is not mutual recognition, but serves only to erect another contradiction between self and other. Such an argument is, however, open to the devastating criticism that recognition does not play the fundamental constitutive role to the formation of the self or to the advancement of human freedom than is widely assumed in the Hegelian recognition dialectic. Yet, in its defence one could point to Honneth’s authoritative sociological work that seems to go a long way in confirming the central role recognition plays in the healthy formation of the self, though it is not without its detractors of course (Honneth, 1995).

So despite the emancipatory potential of his own recognition theoretic, we have seen in this paper that Hegel placed unwarranted and far-reaching limitations on the possibility of recognition in the cosmopolitan sphere. For Hegel, the identity of the state is grounded in its domestic legislation, its individuality which demands international recognition.<sup>22</sup> While one could argue that the institution of sovereignty itself creates a system for the mutual recognition of states – and Wendt (2003) has made such an argument recently to conclude the inevitability of the world state – the point is to penetrate to a deeper social bond between real persons rather than the legal positivist abstraction of sovereignty. The very possibility of mutual recognition is actively circumvented if we continue to emphasise sovereignty because it enforces a legal and cultural separation between persons that distorts the process of recognition internationally. Buchwalter here offers a Hegelian corrective to this outlook. Ultimately, within the parameters of Hegel's system, without a full cosmopolitan sphere of recognition, our knowledge of the Absolute would be incomplete because we would not have genuine knowledge of the other.<sup>23</sup> Without this knowledge we could be neither free in ourselves, nor be free with and through, the other. Such an outcome would be fatal for Hegel's ideal of rational freedom and his theory of emancipation therefore, incomplete. If world history, in the words of Hegel, holds the "highest right of all" – including over finite national spirits – then we must pursue recognition across national frontiers to some form of radical cosmopolitanism, the precise form of which need not be determined here (Inwood, 1995, § 340).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank all those present at the CRIPT (Contemporary Research in International Political Theory) Group Graduate Workshop on Classical IR and Political Theory, Aberystwyth University, Wales, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 for their feedback on my presentation of this research.

<sup>2</sup> This emphasis on the humanism of Hegel is not without its detractors. For example, see Ulmen, (1978, p. 515).

<sup>3</sup> For an example of Hegel's patriarchal gender roles see Hegel (1970, pp. 411-414).

<sup>4</sup> Rather than the myth of Hegel as the 'glorifier of war', Harris has demonstrated that Hegel's views on sovereignty lead to a far more sober view of international relations and conflict. Similarly, for Walt, Hegel views war as something that flows directly from the nature of sovereignty but does not therefore exalt it. Hegel's reference to the "slaughter bench of history" is meant as pathos, not glory. Here freedom is seen as something that has involved violent struggles and while Hegel suggests that war is a factor by which civilisation has progressed closer to freedom, this does not constitute a

celebration of war itself. Williams has posited that for Hegel, the upward progress of the human race towards freedom necessitates disharmony and conflict but because we are in the safe hands of Spirit, Hegel remains optimistic about the human tragedy (Harris, 1996, p. 154f; Walt, 1996, p. 167; Kaufmann, 1959, p. 105; Williams, 1992, p. 101)

<sup>5</sup> Particularly problematic are the readings of Popper, Berlin and Russell which give highly misleading accounts. For discussion of the criticism concerning Hegel's totalitarianism, nationalism and Prussianism see Stewart (1996, pp. 53-128).

<sup>6</sup> On this point see Feuerbach (1983, p. 133). This method would also follow Bernstein's (1972) reading of Hegel that interprets *Geist* as a process expressed by human praxis and Pinkard (1979, p. 417) who has posited that "not all of Hegel's philosophy is inextricably bound up with commitment to such shadowy entities. See also Stepelevich (1990, p. 14, 18)

<sup>7</sup> I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this problem.

<sup>8</sup> Jaeger (2002, pp. 497-517) highlights the importance of mutual recognition and practical morality but focuses on this relation amongst states. His approach nevertheless resonates with the argument here.

<sup>9</sup> See Brooks' (2004, p. 149) response to Jagegar. For a different view see Krombach (1991, p. 82).

<sup>10</sup> For an argument that disputes the idea that Hegel advocated a "form of state idolatory" see Williams (1992, p. 93)

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Hegel's alleged glorification of Prussia in his inaugural address at Berlin University came at a time when Prussia was, temporarily, liberal-oriented, despite the reaction that would soon follow. See Hegel (1999, pp. 181-186) and also Knox (1996, p. 70ff).

<sup>12</sup> Kaufmann (1959, pp. 88-119) offers a refutation of much of Popper's criticisms of Hegel.

<sup>13</sup> Cochrane (1999, pp. 97-98) shows how Mervyn Frost draws on Hegel's the *Philosophy of Right* to reveal the state as a realisation of the ethical ideal, whereas Andrew Linklater has drawn on the *Philosophy of History* to reveal the development of humankind's capacity for self-determination beyond the state.

<sup>14</sup> Hegel's conception of a rational free-will constitutes not just the first order desire of inclination but the evaluation of such wants by norms and values that are universal and objective – it is only when the first order desires are found to coincide with the critical evaluation of what is good and right (in terms of the objective universal) and where such "impulses" become "the rational system of the will's volition", that the will can be considered as *free*, and that which is chosen, as *rational*. As stated by Hegel (1969, § 10), it is not until the will "has itself as its object that the will is for itself what it



is in itself.”

- <sup>15</sup> This is demonstrable through Hegel's discussions against the “judgment of drives” (1969, § 18) and “the rational system of will-determination” (ibid, § 19).
- <sup>16</sup> For Hegel ‘true conscience’, that is, a conscience with an objective content, is only possible with the transition to *Sittlichkeit*. (Hegel, 1969, § 137)
- <sup>17</sup> Recent studies have shown that Hegel did not want to replace Kant's morality of conscience with his social ethic of *Sittlichkeit*, but wanted instead to extend and supplement the Kantian framework. (Pinkard, 1999, p. 222; Pippin, 1997, pp. 417-450; Wood, 2005, pp. 147-166; Gallagher, 1987, 159).
- <sup>18</sup> Rational-freedom could not be achieved alone but rested on intersubjective recognition, or what Hegel called “universal self-consciousness”. It is from this ‘universal self-consciousness’ (which included the “*substance*” of the family, community, state, and the virtues of love, friendship, valour, honour and fame), that ethical life emanates (Hegel, 1977, § 436; Pinkard, 1991, § 150).
- <sup>19</sup> Buchwalter (2007, p. 156)
- <sup>20</sup> Buchwalter quotes Hegel: “Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness”. (Buchwalter, 2007, p. 159 citing Hegel, 1977, p. 110).
- <sup>21</sup> I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point in an earlier draft.
- <sup>22</sup> For Hegel, the Westphalian system was not devoid of right – recognition of states is crucial in the respect of independence and sovereignty (Hegel, 1969, § 331R; Fine, 2003, p. 620).
- <sup>23</sup> This should not be taken as advocating that recognition is only a means of the formation of self-consciousness. I believe it has a far wider purchase on social relations beyond the formation of the self.

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