

Novakovic, Andreja

Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life

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Reviewed by Mark Alznauer

Introduction

In the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel alludes to a well-known dictum of Francis Bacon's: "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." Bacon claims that to avoid falling into error about religion you should either never philosophize about it at all or you should continue until you have arrived at first principles. In *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*, Andreja Novakovic argues that Hegel's account of ethical life has the same ambivalent structure: he thinks that if you want to avoid error about ethical life, you should either refrain from explicitly reflecting on it or you should persist until you have arrived at a full philosophical comprehension of it. As with Bacon, the greatest danger faces those in the middle—the half-philosophical individuals who reflect too much to be content with ordinary beliefs about our duties and rights, but too little to see the inherent rationality of our form of ethical life. She argues that it is just this intermediary group—the atheists of the ethical world—who are the primary audience for the *Philosophy of Right*, and that the main task of the book is to help them remember something that they knew before they started reflecting, a task it accomplishes by providing a *science* of right as opposed to a mere *theory* of right.

This provides Novakovic with a powerful and judicious way of framing Hegel's project. It foregrounds Hegel's radical re-conception of the basic task of ethical philosophy, and immediately raises a series of difficult interpretive and philosophical questions, questions that Novakovic pursues with admirable clarity and with much success.

The first question is: in what sense do the non-philosophical, those who never explicitly reflect on their duties and rights, *already know* what is right and wrong? Her answer is that even if unphilosophical citizens never "step back" from ethical life, their habitual or customary behavior is not to be seen as blind or mechanical but as involving an implicit form of reflection: a sense of

the meaningfulness of their social rights and obligations, of what makes it worthwhile to continue to uphold them.

A natural follow-up question is: what is the danger of half-philosophy or theory--why do our initial attempts to explicitly reflect on our ethical life lead to a *forgetting* or *loss* of ethical knowledge? Novakovic argues that the problem with reflection is that it discounts or brackets comparatively unreflective modes of knowing in favor of an attempt to derive ethical standards from “exclusively subjective sources” (11). She suggests that if such abstract reflection does not become aware of its own limitations, it leads to a general skepticism about ethical life.

This gives rise to a third question, one very pressing given Novakovic’s particular emphasis on second nature: if explicit reflection is usually pernicious in this way, does this leave us with no resources for criticizing society? On this point, Novakovic gives us what she thinks Hegel’s answer *should have been* given what he had to say about immanent critique in the *Phenomenology*—which is that critical reflection is only warranted when the occasion demands it: when we experience genuine contradictions in our ethical life, contradictions between the principles that have implicitly guided us heretofore, and a reality which proves that they cannot be actualized. In these cases, though, it is not a specifically philosophical critique that is called for, but a form of critique that is continuous with the experience of the embedded, pre-philosophical perspective.

A final question thus poses itself: if philosophy is not needed either to navigate a rational social order, or to criticize an imperfectly rational one, then what is it good for? Why provide a philosophy of right at all? She answers that the *Philosophy of Right* primarily addresses itself to the plight of the half-philosophical; it offers a way for them to recollect the knowledge that they had—and still have at some level—but which they have bracketed and suspended in their attempt to provide a reflective justification for ethical life in terms of certain abstract principles. And it does this by scientifically demonstrating that the same abstract principles they refer to in order to criticize ethical life actually presuppose ethical life for their actuality and validity.

As this summary suggests, *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life* covers a great deal of ground—there is no way to treat all the topics it addresses. I will focus on what I take to be its most far-reaching claim, which is that Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* is doing something radically different than the other moral theories of its time, something that has no real precedent in the history of Western moral philosophy. Although something like this has suggested before by other

commentators, I am unaware of any other statement of this position which develops it as systematically and with so much textual fidelity.¹

Although the division is a little bit artificial, I think it is useful to divide Novakovic's account of what Hegel is doing into a negative and a positive proposal. The negative proposal involves reading Hegel as denying that we need a certain traditional kind of philosophical ethics or moral theory—one oriented towards providing standards which can help individuals navigate ethical life. The positive proposal is that this does not leave us with a view of philosophy as irrelevant to practical matters or as merely therapeutic, but gives us an entirely new conception of the ethical task of philosophy: that of providing a systematic account of our own moral beliefs which shows whether they are actualizable in the social world in which we live.

The negative proposal

We can start with the negative proposal. Novakovic argues that Hegel rejected one still common way of understanding the task of philosophy in the domain of ethical life—namely, the task of formulating a moral theory. At the risk of anachronism, let me point to Mill's utilitarianism as a good example of the kind of theory that she claims Hegel rejected. For Mill, the central task of a moral philosophy is to provide a criterion of right and wrong action. Mill argues that since the morality of an action is nothing but the application of a general law to the individual case, we need to know the general law or principle that determines the moral rightness and wrongness of actions in order to achieve the end of action. Although he admits that the principle he is going to put forward (happiness) is not entirely new, but already tacitly influences our decisions, he is confident that a philosophical treatment of this issue will help resolve certain dilemmas individual agents face in real life. For Mill, philosophy is directly relevant to the ordinary individual agent because it can help her make better decisions about what to do.

What is the evidence that Hegel rejected moral theory in this sense? Novakovic points to several passages which suggest just this. She shows that Hegel denies that philosophy should issue instructions on how the world ought to be; that he seems to praise uncritical identification with the ethical order; and that he clearly suggests that everyone already knows the truth about right (111-

¹ See, e.g., the brief treatment of Hegel in the title essay of Raymond Geuss's *Outside Ethics*.

15 and 161-67). In a notorious passage from his lectures on world history, Hegel puts the point even more unambiguously:

The individual's morality will then consist in fulfilling the duties imposed on him by his social station; these can be recognized without difficulty, and their particular form will depend on the particular class to which the individual belongs...To try to define duty in itself is idle speculation, and to regard morality as something difficult to attain may even indicate a desire to exempt oneself from one's duties.²

These passages make it clear that the task of providing an abstract universal criterion to help ordinary individual agents make decisions is nowhere on Hegel's agenda. Indeed, he thinks that even looking for such a criterion can be a sign that we are unserious about our duties.

Although it is easy to show that Hegel rejected moral theory in the Millian sense, it is less easy to understand *why* he rejected it. According to some of Hegel's critics, the reason Hegel thought moral theory was unnecessary was because he thought ethical life was already perfectly rational and so there is no need to worry about whether we actually ought to comply to the duties of our social station. This is sometimes described as an excessively conservative position but I am not aware of any conservative philosopher or political theorist who ever held such an optimistic view of modern ethical life. At any rate, Novakovic rightly emphasizes that Hegel's stated position is not that *no* criticism of ethical life is necessary, but just that *no philosophical* criticism of ethical life is necessary.³ Hegel says there is "quite a lot" worth criticizing in any given state, he only insists that it does not take a philosophical license to do so.

A second possibility is that Hegel rejected moral theory because he thinks of moral action as involving a situational awareness of what to do that is inculcated through habit rather than the merely cognitive subsumption of individual cases under general laws that Mill invokes. This would make Hegel's alternative to moral theory akin to that form of Aristotelian virtue ethics defended by John McDowell in a series of essays. Although Novakovic grants a strong similarity between Hegel and McDowell—namely in their shared belief that habit is a necessary component of ethical knowledge—she also sees an important difference, one that makes it unlikely that

² Hegel, *Lectures on World History*, 80.

³ See Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic*, §6R.

Hegel's rejection of moral theory comes from this source. Whereas McDowell thinks that moral action is ultimately *uncodifiable*, something that cannot be captured under any set of rules, Hegel is convinced that any situational awareness can and must be reproducible in a rule-like form.⁴ So although Hegel agrees with McDowell's Aristotle that habit is essential to ethical knowledge, that is not because ethical knowledge is ineffably particularistic, or because no one can understand the relevant principles without the right upbringing. Hegel's point is more restricted: it is that "we cannot be said to know our duty unless we demonstrate a commitment to doing it, and we only demonstrate such a commitment through the habit of the ethical" (25). If this is Hegel's position, though, it would appear that moral theory is fully possible in the sense that the general laws of moral action can be formulated and *understood*, it is just that we cannot *know* what this theory teaches as our duty until we those duties have become second nature to us.

As this suggests, Novakovic's discussion of this issue is quite subtle, turning on a fine distinction between understanding and knowledge. Her basic point, that Hegel does not reject moral theory because he thinks ethical knowledge is uncodifiable is convincing (to me, at least). After all, Hegel does not say that the problem of defining duty is that it is enormously *difficult* to fully capture all of the nuances of every situation we might find ourselves in—he says, instead, that it is *easy* to know what you ought to do since such knowledge has already been unambiguously promulgated in public laws, morality, and religion. But Novakovic goes on to make a significantly more controversial interpretive claim: which is that Hegel thinks one cannot *know* one's duty unless one has the habit of conforming with it. Holding that position would make sense if, like McDowell, we were understanding ethical knowledge as situationally specific, or as a skill like knowing how to write (an example she treats in some detail). But if we are conceding that ethical knowledge *can* be fully codified in terms of general rules applied to individual cases then it is unclear to me in what sense these rules can only be genuinely known by someone who habitually complies with them. If our paradigm for ethical knowledge is a general principle like "don't break contracts," then are we supposed to think that as someone loses the habit of conforming with his contractual obligations he is somehow losing *knowledge* of that general principle? In what sense of knowledge would that be true?

⁴ Novakovic's evidence for Hegel's rejection of uncodifiability is mostly drawn from Hegel's comments on law, but she plausibly argues that the point can be generalized to ethical knowledge (see Novakovic, *Second Nature*, 63).

A third possibility is that Hegel's skepticism about our need for moral theory is more like that of Bernard Williams than it is like that of McDowell. Novakovic does not discuss Williams in great detail but she indicates that he is the contemporary philosopher whose critique of moral theory is closest to Hegel's (111-12, 167). In *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Williams offers a wide variety of reasons to reject what he calls "ethical theory"—which he defines as an account of ethical thought which implies a general test for the correctness of basic ethical belief (or else implies that there cannot be such a test).⁵ But his primary complaint, to simplify things a bit, is that such theories rely on a notion of moral obligation that is both philosophically dubious and which leads to a distorted, overmoralized view of ethical life: one that fails to recognize that the "machinery of everyday blame" is not self-standing, but only makes sense when surrounded by system of customs and institutions.⁶

Williams himself notes that this an essentially Hegelian point; he says Hegel was the first philosopher to worry that moral or ethical theory is "too far removed... from social and historical reality and from any concrete sense of a particular ethical life."⁷ But there is an important difference between his reasons for worrying about this false abstraction and Hegel's. For Williams (and again, I simplify) the basic problem is a recognizably Nietzschean one: once you see how blame actually operates in social reality, you see that the moral system depends on various fictions about individual responsibility that cannot be sustained.⁸ Williams thinks these fictions have some salutary consequences—they encourage people to identify more completely with the ethical order—but he thinks they also lead individuals to misunderstand their own fear and resentment against wrong-doing as the voice of a law that transcends history. Williams is not sure whether our practices of assigning praise and blame could fully survive a "reflective and nonmythical understanding" of these social mechanisms, but he is convinced that moral theory is no longer of any help to us in navigating these difficulties.

⁵ To be more precise, Williams says "[a]n ethical theory is a theoretical account of what ethical thought and practice are, which account either implies a general test for the correctness of basic ethical beliefs and principles or else implies that there cannot be such a test" (Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 72).

⁶ Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 194.

⁷ Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 197 (also see 104).

⁸ See Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 191-96.

For Novakovic's Hegel, the ultimate problem is different. The reason it is dangerous to abstract principles of right from the social and historical reality from which they have arisen is because it is only in this context that such principles could prove their legitimacy or justification in the first place (169 and 171). Although this goes against some still-influential ways of reading the *Philosophy of Right*, it seems exactly right to me as an interpretive matter. Rather than starting with certain abstract principles which are presumed to be self-justified, and then showing that they obligate us to form certain institutions, Hegel is starting with certain principles we might wrongly oppose to ethical life and showing that they require certain specific institutions or practices.⁹ This fits Hegel's claim that ethical life is both the *foundation* and *presupposition* of the previous spheres of right—and Novakovic makes a powerful case for it.¹⁰

The devil, though, is in the details. The more difficult question is this: why does Hegel think that no principles of right could have legitimacy or justification on their own, independently of social and historical reality? Novakovic's way of answering this question is familiar enough to sound distinctively Hegelian but quite original in its specific details and implications. She says: "[F]or Hegel, the legitimacy of any principle of right depends on its actualizability. It is a rational principle, so one worth pursuing only if it can be actualized" (171; also see 141). The basic thought she attributes to Hegel is that no principle can be deemed rational or binding unless it can be actualized, or consistently enacted, and that this is something that can only be known from an empirical analysis of historical reality (177).

Let me register one qualm about this before I move on. There is an important difference between saying that a given principle of right is only legitimate if it can be actualized, and that it is only legitimate if the conditions for its actualization are already more or less present. I take it that Novakovic is saying the former, but not the latter.¹¹ This suggests she is primarily worried about cases where the principle being invoked is entirely unrealistic, could never possibly be realized in a society. But there are other cases Hegel also seems to be worried about. For example,

⁹ Novakovic strongly associates the former method with Fichte, but the same constructivist method is also clearly at work in Kant's *Rechtslehre*.

¹⁰ Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §408 Z.

¹¹ I am hesitant to attribute this position to Novakovic because she also thinks we can only *know* that a principle can be actualized *after* it has become actualized (Novakovic, *Second Nature*, 179). This is how she captures Hegel's claims about the retrospectivity of philosophical insight (the owl of Minerva flying only at dusk, etc.).

he says it was a mistake for Napoleon to impose a rational constitution on Catholic Spain.¹² The problem here is not that the rational principles codified in the Bayonne Constitution could not be actualized *period*—they had already proved to actualizable in France—but just that the conditions for their actualization were not present *in Spain*. This suggests that the actualization principle Hegel is invoking might be stricter than the principle Novakovic relies on, which entails only that a principle needs to be *actualizable* to be rational, not that certain conditions need to be *actualized* for a principle to be justified.

We will return to the question of whether this view of the actualization principle is strict enough in a moment, but let me now summarize Novakovic's interpretation of Hegel's negative proposal—Hegel's account of the insufficiency of traditional moral theory. On her reading, Hegel's problem with moral theory is that it cannot determine by itself whether the principles or criteria it appeals to are legitimate, and it cannot do this because their legitimacy depends on their actualizability, whether they can be consistently enacted in an actual social community. And moral theory cannot address this latter question, she thinks, because the question of whether a principle can be actualized is clearly an empirical one: it “awaits the unfolding of historical experience” (171).

The positive proposal

It is easy to see, given this account of the limitations of moral theory, the kind of positive proposal that would be needed to fix the problem. We need to replace abstract moral theory with a more empirical and reconstructive approach, one that can determine whether a given principle of right can actually be successfully realized. This, according to Novakovic, is what we get in the *Philosophy of Right*. One of the great achievements of her book is that it offers a highly original reading of the *Philosophy of Right* which shows how it can be read as carrying out something like this project. Her reading of Hegel is akin to Honneth's recent attempt to ‘reactualize’ the *Philosophy of Right*, but she shows greater care in squaring her reading with Hegel's own methodological commitments, commitments that Honneth himself explicitly brackets or ignores.¹³

¹² Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §274 A; Hegel makes similar comments about the limitations of an *a priori* code of law in *Philosophy of Mind*, §552.

¹³ This would make Novakovic's account an example of what Honneth calls the “direct strategy” for re-appropriating the *Philosophy of Right* (see Honneth, *Pathologies*, 4-5).

In order to facilitate comprehension of Novakovic's reading of the *Philosophy of Right*, and set the stage for my questions, let me provide a little bit of technical terminology. As anyone who has read the *Philosophy of Right* is aware, the book is structured in the following way. In the Introduction, Hegel provides a partial deduction the *concept* (*Begriff*) of right. He then proceeds from the abstract concept of right to a series of increasingly more concrete determinations in the development of this concept which he terms *shapes* (*Gestalten*) of right, like "the right of property, contract, morality, etc." (§32 R). These shapes culminate or result in a final shape, ethical life, which is characterized as the *actuality* (*Wirklichkeit*) of the concept of right. Any adequate interpretation of the *Philosophy of Right* will need to provide answers to three questions: where does the *concept* of right come from? How do we get from the concept to the various *shapes* of the concept like the right of property? How do we determine that one of these shapes counts as the genuine *actualization* (or truth) of the concept? Novakovic's book offers original and provocative answers to all three questions.

The first question concerns the basic concept of right—where does it come from and what is its status in the ensuing argument? Novakovic argues that because Hegel thinks any principle is only legitimate insofar as it has proven to be actualizable, he must regard the principle he starts with as provisional, as something to be justified only by the ensuing argument that it is actualizable. But she recognizes that Hegel tends to suggest that the starting principle of any science, the concept of the science, is only provisional when taken in independence from the other philosophical sciences—properly considered, the fundamental concept of any science has its proof in the sciences that precede it (185-6).¹⁴ This appears contradictory, but she thinks these claims can be reconciled by viewing the system as a circle of circles (187). Each science is tasked with vindicating its own starting point, though that starting point is provided by another science.

It seems to me, though, that the appearance of a contradiction here is driven by an equivocation about what it means for a concept to be justified or legitimate. Novakovic's position seems to be that *if* the starting concept of the *Philosophy of Right* were considered as justified in the sense of being fully established prior to the argument that ensues from it, *then* Hegel would have no choice but to regard the concept of right as binding on individuals independently of actuality—thus lapsing back into moral theory in the problematic sense. But why couldn't Hegel

¹⁴ See, e.g., Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics*, 24-5.

simultaneously think that the concept of right is conceptually necessary given the sciences that precede it, and that right requires certain social conditions in order to exist as valid and binding on individuals? Is there any necessary incompatibility between claiming that the concept of right can be legitimately binding on individuals only under certain social conditions and the claim that the concept of right is the only legitimate starting point for a science of right? They both seem like perfectly Hegelian claims to me.

The second question concerns how one progresses through the various shapes of right. On Novakovic's interpretation, it really doesn't matter where you begin or in what order you proceed. In principle, you could begin anywhere, with whatever principle of right you would like to examine, any commitment we currently avow (184, 188, 196, 200). But she notes that in practice, Hegel's accounts have a more determinate structure: they move from more abstract shapes to more concrete. For example, the *Philosophy of Right* starts with the most abstract standards of right and ends with the most concrete manifestation of right, ethical life. She suggests that what motivates Hegel to proceed in this fashion is his stated desire to liberate the half-philosophical from "the shackles of some abstraction." By starting with one abstract principle and then showing that this principle requires the precise institutions which already exist in order to be valid, Hegel is able to remind the half-philosophical of something they already know, but which lies below reflective awareness (190). The *Philosophy of Right* does this by showing that the more abstract standards lack *determinacy* and thus are inapplicable to reality unless they are supplemented by other practices and principles (197). In other words, he is reminding us that the standards we use to criticize ethical life only function as applicable criteria of evaluation by virtue of this taken-for-granted context (199).

I think this is a perceptive, powerful, and convincing way of understanding the basic task that the *Philosophy of Right* sets for itself; it is an improvement on the currently prevalent view that the *Philosophy of Right* is itself supposed to reconcile the ordinary or non-philosophical individual to the modern social order.¹⁵ As Novakovic rightly points out, if a society is truly rational, its citizens should already be reconciled to it; they should not need philosophy to accomplish that task (202). But it seems to me that the very cogency of Novakovic's reconstruction of the argument of *Philosophy of Right* militates against her claim that, in principle,

¹⁵ See Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy*.

it does not matter where you start or in what order you proceed, for it suggests a quite intricate ordering of principles from more abstract to more concrete. Indeed, if *all* of Hegel's sciences in fact proceed in this manner, which she herself seems to concede at one point, then it seems quite unlikely that Hegel does not have a more general reason for proceeding from abstract to concrete, one that goes beyond the specific rationale Novakovic provides, which only fits the *Philosophy of Right*. This suggests that the order in which Hegel proceeds might itself be a necessary feature of the scientific method as Hegel understands it (and, indeed, there are places where he seems to say just that).¹⁶

Again, I think Novakovic resists this interpretation of Hegel's method because she is worried that if we find *too much* deductive necessity in the progression of shapes of right, we will lack any way of distinguishing his method from that of Fichte and the other moral theorists. But an argument, say, that the right of property necessarily requires the development of property law and a judicial system in order to be fully actual (*wirklich*) does not imply that the property rights are valid independently of social circumstances. It seems to me that Hegel could argue that the progression from the abstractions of abstract right to concreteness of ethical life is necessary, even *a priori* necessary, without lapsing into moral theory in the problematic sense, which involves viewing principles like the right of property as authoritative independently of the conditions of social reality.¹⁷

The third question concerns how we know that the concept of right, or any particular principle of right, has been fully actualized. For Novakovic's Hegel, we can only know that a principle has been adequately actualized through historical experience which shows that it can be consistently enacted. But she is explicit that even a positive verdict here is not definitive, for experience is never sufficient to prove that new problems or contradictions with the implementation of a principle will not emerge in the future. This gives her Hegel an appealingly modest profile. On her interpretation, modern ethical life is not the complete and final realization of a certain number of principles of right that are themselves necessary forms taken by the concept of right. Instead, the modern state is a provisionally adequate realization of certain principles of

¹⁶ See, e.g., Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 54.

¹⁷ To be clear, the question of whether any given society has the correct institutions to support a given right *is* irreducibly empirical, but that does not mean there is no way of logically deducing the dependence of a given right on certain institutions.

right that we provisionally avow. It may turn out that we need new principles in the future, or that reality presents new obstacles to the realization of our existing principles—both these options are explicitly kept open.

There are certainly some passages in Hegel which lend support to this interpretation, and Novakovic exploits these to full effect. But rather than enter into a full debate about whether this reading does justice to Hegel's stated ambitions for the *Philosophy of Right*, let me just raise a single philosophical worry about this position: which is that although the requirement that a principle of right can be actualized might be a *necessary* condition for its legitimacy, it does not appear to be a *sufficient* condition. Hegel himself seems to admit the need for more than actualizability when he says that a determination of right "may be shown to be entirely *grounded in* and *consistent with* the prevailing *circumstances* and *existing* legal institutions, yet it may be contrary to right [*unrechtlich*] and irrational [*unvernünftig*] in and for itself."¹⁸ This suggests that the actualization test, at least as Novakovic interprets it, is too weak to offer a full justification of our principles. For even if we can say that the principles we happen to avow are adequately realized in our own circumstances and institutions, this gives us no reason at all to think that those principles are themselves genuinely rational.

Conclusion

There are many interesting aspects of *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life* that I have not touched on, and that are worthy of further discussion. I have focused on Novakovic's suggestion that Hegel's practical philosophy has been misread as a moral theory—an attempt to identify the ultimate moral principles that determine right and wrong action—when in reality it is an attempt to replace moral theory with something entirely novel: a kind of normative social theory with empirical content. Although it is hard to completely ignore Hegel's explicit denial that individuals need philosophy to tell them what their duties are, many interpretations attribute to Hegel what is ultimately only a modified version of this task: one that supplements an account of what we ought to do with an account of the institutions we ought to bring into existence.¹⁹ Indeed, it has been hard to see what the alternative to moral theory of this sort could even be, if not either

¹⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §3R.

¹⁹ Most recently, see Westphal, "Hegel, Natural Law & Moral Constructivism."

an extreme and unpalatable form of ethical conventionalism or an Aristotelian ethical particularism that is hard to square with Hegel's ambition to provide a science of right.²⁰

Novakovic, however, has offered a clear and persuasive alternative, arguing that Hegel takes the task of a philosophy of right to be primarily an attempt to remind half-philosophical individuals—the atheists of the ethical world whom reflection has alienated from their own better wisdom—that the very principles they appeal to in order to criticize modern life are only justified and determinate by virtue of precisely those ethical practices and institutions that they are being turned against. This not only fits the text better—making sense of passages that are often soft-pedalled—it also provides us with a clear idea of what could replace moral theory as it is traditionally understood. In discharging my duties as a critic, I have identified places where I think her re-interpretation goes beyond what Hegel's texts strictly warrant, jettisoning too much of the conceptual necessity Hegel seeks to find in the domain of right. But this dispute takes for granted that the fundamental claims she is making here about the radically unconventional nature of Hegel's practical philosophy are both important and correct. I hope that the book will find a wide readership.

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²⁰ A third possibility which Novakovic does not neglect to engage with is Dean Moyar's suggestion, in *Hegel's Conscience*, that Hegel's ethical teaching bottoms out in an appeal to "true conscience" (see Novakovic, *Second Nature*, 46-7).

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