



Hegel's Ethics of Recognition

By Robert R. Williams

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In this significant contribution to Hegel scholarship, Robert Williams develops the most comprehensive account to date of Hegel's concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*). Fichte introduced the concept of recognition as a presupposition of both Rousseau's social contract and Kant's ethics. Williams shows that Hegel appropriated the concept of recognition as the general pattern of his concept of ethical life, breaking with natural law theory yet incorporating the Aristotelian view that rights and virtues are possible only within a certain kind of community.

He explores Hegel's intersubjective concept of spirit (*Geist*) as the product of affirmative mutual recognition and his conception of recognition as the right to have rights. Examining Hegel's Jena manuscripts, his *Philosophy of Right*, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and other works, Williams shows how the concept of recognition shapes and illuminates Hegel's understandings of crime and punishment, morality, the family, the state, sovereignty, international relations, and war. A concluding chapter on the reception and reworking of the concept of recognition by contemporary thinkers including Derrida, Levinas, and Deleuze demonstrates Hegel's continuing centrality to the philosophical concerns of our age.

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"This is a major contribution to Hegel scholarship. The most detailed and most useful study of recognition in the Hegel literature in any language, it will serve to orient the discussion of this concept for many years to come."—Tom Rockmore, author of *Cognition: An Introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*

"A major contribution to Hegel studies . . . with which every serious interpreter, not merely of Hegel's 'ethics' but of Hegel's philosophy as a whole, will have to come to terms. There is no other work like this currently available in any language."—Daniel Breazeale, editor and translator of *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Robert R. Williams, Professor of Philosophy at Hiram College and Vice-President of the Hegel Society of America, is author of *Recognition: Hegel and Fichte on the Other* (1992).

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