

# Introduction

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The present special issue of *Philosophica* offers new considerations on one of the central topics of 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary political philosophy and ethics: recognition. These new considerations have in common that they basically consist of re-appropriations of classic works and/or authors of the political philosophy and ethics of recognition: Hegel, Sophocles' *Antigone*, Honneth, Fraser and Locke. In a certain way, the four papers composing this special issue follow Confucius' saying that authentic knowledge of the new is only possible by means of revising the old.

The first contribution in the present issue, "On the Relation of Recognition and *Bildung* in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*" by Marina Bykova, is a very detailed analytical study of some parts of this work of Hegel. Her aim is to demonstrate to what extent Hegel's concepts of recognition and *Bildung*, at least in the *Phenomenology*, are intimately linked and conceptually interconnected and, therefore, cannot be properly understood if discussed separately. In this regard, Bykova's paper exposes the partiality of the usual reading of recognition in the *Phenomenology* that does not connect this concept with *Bildung*. According to Bykova's reading of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel uses both concepts to develop his concept of the self as the self-cultivating agency capable of achieving self-knowledge through and within the universal whole realised in the political community. Recognition is presupposed in all individual formation processes, since *Bildung* is only possible within a space for intersubjective actions based on reciprocal recognition. In this regard, recognition acts are constitutive in the complex process of *Bildung*. By highlighting the link between recognition and formation, this paper opens up a new space for reconsidering the relation between Fichte and Hegel's concepts of recognition, since Fichte considers education as the principal form of recognition.

Alberto Andronico's "Out of Measure" is a deconstruction of a well-known and extensively discussed motive in the literature about the unavoidable tensions between natural and positive law in recognition acts: the tension between the divine laws and the law of the mortals in Sophocles' *Antigone*. Against the common interpretation, according to which this Greek tragedy must be understood as the archetypal account of the eternal conflict between the universal value of

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natural laws and the contingency of law enacted by those in power, Andronico proposes a new reading of this work. In his reading, he discloses the tragic nature of the conflict between Antigone and Creon. The tragedy of the misrecognition between Antigone and Creon resides, according to Andronico, in the radical incommensurability of their discourses. In other words: both discourses are irreducible to a common sphere – be it that of law, ethics or politics. The central question here is what kind of subjectivity is produced by a dissenting dynamic based on reciprocal misrecognition.

Sofie Avery's article "The Struggle for Recognition: lost before it was fought" approaches the phenomenon of identity politics through the lens of the *recognition of difference*. Taking as point of entry the debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth on the relation between recognition and redistribution, Avery argues for the inadequacy of their theories of recognition in accommodating the recognition of difference. By drawing on Emiliano Acosta's concept of a *logic of identification*, Avery demonstrates the pitfalls of a struggle for recognition conducted in a way that legitimizes and reproduces the existing social order. This approach, which Fraser calls *affirmative*, is contrasted with a strategy that is at once destructive and constructive, a *transformative* approach. Avery shows that this distinction is missing completely from Honneth's theory of recognition. Fraser, on the other hand, makes this distinction but does not think through its full implications. Avery's contribution is thus to argue that this distinction is fundamental and that struggles for the recognition of difference that take the affirmative strategy result in the reproduction of the exclusive social order. As such, these struggles can be considered *lost before they were fought*.

In his paper "Dissent as political legitimacy", Daan Van Cauwenberge contributes to re-thinking the tensions between recognition and dissent by showing that Locke's idea of a right to dissent actually functions as a tool to legitimate the social order. In his critical re-reading of one of the classics of modern political philosophy, namely *Two Treatises of Government*, Van Cauwenberge argues that contrary to the standard reading of Locke as a defender of the right to revolt, Locke's right to revolt actually neutralizes the power of people to rebel against their conditions by integrating this dissenting power – *mutatis mutandis* the multitude as *potentia* – in the social order. The truth of the right to revolt seems to be that it is a right that *per definitionem* cannot be exercised, since it only functions to reconcile real political oppression and imaginary revolutionary freedom. In this regard, Locke reduces the right to revolt to a rhetorically strategic device to validate the power of the state.

We would like to thank the authors for their intellectual engagement with the proposed topic for this special issue and first of all for their patience and openness during the review process. We also would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive remarks that have deeply contributed to the scientific quality of the present special issue of *Philosophica*.