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## **The Use of a Disability Lens for Hegel Studies**

Jane Dryden  
for Hegel's Encyclopaedic System and its Legacy  
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jdryden@mta.ca

I'm Jane Dryden, from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, Canada, in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. Thanks for welcoming me to Finland!

Disability is a significant issue in contemporary social theorizing, and its importance is gradually becoming more recognized within philosophy itself. Work in disability theory invites us to understand disability as a relational phenomenon, not solely contained within the body but the result of many historical, epistemological, social, political, and economic factors. As such, it has important connections to a range of topics: critical work on disability teaches us that what is assumed to be “normal” and “natural” are the result of historical processes and theories, and that our beliefs about disability reveal a broader worldview about contingency and purity.

We ought to examine disability throughout the history of philosophy, and use it to excavate assumptions about what kinds of bodies and minds are worthwhile, and what kinds of perspectives have been excluded. There has been some work on this, particularly within the last few years, but we are just beginning. What does the history of philosophy look like if we recognize that disability is central to human experience, and not an occasional counter-example?

While there has been little work on Hegel and disability, his system is strikingly suitable for conceptualizing disability, and I have argued elsewhere about Hegel's value to disability scholars.<sup>1</sup>

The focus of *this* paper is to argue the value of a using disability lens for interpreting *Hegel*, as it helps

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<sup>1</sup> The main location is Dryden, “Hegel, Feminist Philosophy, and Disability: Rereading our History,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* vol. 33 no. 4 (October 2013); special issue on “Improving Feminist Philosophy and Theory by Taking Account of Disability,” edited by Shelley Tremain. Disability and disability theory also figure into “Embodiment and Vulnerability in Fichte and Hegel,” *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, Vol. 52 no. 1 (March 2013): 109-128, and “Digestion, Habit, and Being at Home: Hegel and the Gut as Ambiguous Other,” *PhaenEx: Journal of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture* vol. 11 no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2016). All of these are linked from my website: [janedryden.weebly.com/research](http://janedryden.weebly.com/research)

demonstrate and make clear the interconnections of his system – including the *Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, and *Philosophy of Right* – as we see how they each play a role in creating disability. It also opens up new interpretive possibilities for using his work in contemporary social theory, by showing how an expanded conception of disability has effects elsewhere in the system, and how it may be linked to other forms of hierarchy. A disability lens does not necessarily mean just picking out those rare instances where he mentions disability or particular disabilities, but noting, for example, what forms of difference seem to matter, and asking what might change if we saw the kind of difference associated with disability taken more seriously, as a meaningful part of humanity and one which gives rise to experience and knowledge that enriches our conception of the whole. Doing this, I suggest, is in line with Hegel’s core philosophical commitments.

First I’ll briefly explain how disability is theorized within Disability Studies, to show why this work can be such an important and useful lens for philosophical understanding. This is a rich and developing area of theory within which there is much scholarly disagreement, but it is fair to say that what different disability theories have in common is a strong focus on the social and political dimensions of disability, a commitment to valuing different kinds of bodies and minds, and a belief in the worth of the different perspectives offered on the world through living with disability. They critically question the idea of the “normal” and the hierarchy that positions some bodies and minds as “lesser” or disposable via sexism, racism, xenophobia, and of course ableism. They all seek to disrupt and challenge the common understanding of disability as an exclusively or primarily biomedical issue concerning individual bodies – a view often referred to as the “medical model of disability.”

One common alternative to the medical model is called the “social model of disability.” It distinguishes between impairment as the biological, neurological, or anatomical difference, and disability as something created in the relationship between the individual and their lived environment. Many disability theorists and activists argue that it is this lived environment – shaped by stigma, assumptions, inaccessible workplaces, inaccessible transportation, and so forth – that is *disabling* and a source of oppression. On the social model, the response to disability is a more accessible society which includes everyone, rather than a medical cure or fix for all impairments.

Of course, some have then argued that the social model goes too far – in the urgency of arguing for better politics, the social model overlooks the experience of the body (and the impairment) itself. On a related note, some have then argued that the concept of impairment is under-theorized and insufficiently historicized, given our developing and changing concepts of biology, medicine and health.<sup>2</sup> How can we hold these together? The role of the body, bodily difference, the learned habits of the body, the social, and the political, *and* the role of our concepts of these in shaping our experience of them? Working with disability involves all of these; the biological and the social both check any analysis that attempts to leave either aside. [5 min]

Bringing this together with Hegel’s system demonstrates his relevance (the suitability of his theory for thinking through these multilayered and interacting processes) and invites us to think with him in grappling with assumptions about normalcy. This could help us come to an expanded view of the worth of different ways of being in the world, each of which contributes its own understanding and knowledge, thus furthering our overall human progress toward appreciating the truth of the whole.<sup>3</sup> To come to a full conception of disability in Hegel requires attending to the biological, metaphysical, epistemological, social, psychological, political, and religious or theological, and thus put us in a good situation to observe in practice their intertwining. Due to time I won’t be able to go into all of these in depth, but I hope I say enough to make it clear that this is work worth doing.

I will go over what Hegel says explicitly about disability (which is not much), but then I will use poverty and participation in the system of needs as an initial case study demonstrating the questions and philosophical avenues opened up by critical consideration of disability in his work.

What Hegel says more or less initially reveals the same framework and expectations as the medical model.<sup>4</sup> Probably the most well-known discussion of disability in Hegel is his discussion of

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<sup>2</sup> Drawing on Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Ian Hacking, Shelley Tremain makes this argument in “On the Government of Disability,” *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 27 no. 4 (2001): 617-636, and *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Martin Wendte makes a related argument that disabled people have an epistemological advantage within Hegel’s system due to the obstacles they face; he argues that this means they are well situated to appreciate relational autonomy. For more on Hegel and relational autonomy in the context of disability, see Wendte, “To Develop Relational Autonomy: On Hegel’s View of People with Disabilities,” in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock (Grand Rapids MI and Cambridge UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012 [Kindle edition]), and for more on Hegel and relational autonomy generally, see my dissertation, *Relational Autonomy: Bridging a Gap Between Feminism and German Idealism* (Fordham University, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> These examples are collected and discussed by Martin Wendte in “To Develop Relational Autonomy.”

intellectual disability in the context of madness in the Anthropology section of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. This section is fairly dismissive, arguing that intellectually disabled people are closed off from the world, turned inward on themselves (§408A).<sup>1</sup> Recent work on philosophy of intellectual disability<sup>5</sup> argues that this is not the case. Hegel seems largely to be repeating contemporary empirical and philosophical views, particularly from Pinel.<sup>6</sup> In a remark on Objective Spirit in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel states that “the *responsibility* of children, imbeciles, lunatics, etc. for their actions is either totally *absent* or diminished” (PR §120 Remark).<sup>7</sup> This is a fairly common view within the liberal tradition, which contemporary philosophy of disability has worked to unpack and critique.<sup>8</sup>

As far as physical disability goes, Hegel affirms the person while disparaging the disability. Martin Wendte draws attention to two mentions in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, both referring to Christ’s healing of disability – one pointing out that “Christ healed a withered” hand and pointing out that many others have withered hands and are unhealed; the other pointing out that the effects of faith and spirit are present in all ages, that “cripples are healed, the blind see, the deaf hear, right up to the present day”.<sup>9</sup> These are both mentions of disability primarily as unwanted contingency. We see this unwantedness as well in an editorial addition to §258 of the *Philosophy of Right*: “But the ugliest man, the criminal, the invalid, or the cripple, is still a living human being; the affirmative aspect — life — survives in spite of such deficiencies, and it is with this affirmative aspect that we

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<sup>5</sup> See Eva Kittay’s work, Licia Carlson, *Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, and Sophia Wong, “At home with Down syndrome and Gender,” *Hypatia* vol. 17 no. 3 (2002), 89-117.

<sup>6</sup> Contrast Kant in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, for whom idiocy “cannot really be called sickness of soul; it is rather absence of soul” (7:212). – at least for Hegel they do *have* souls! Kant, “Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view,” trans. Robert B. Loudon, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Günter Zöller and Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2007.

<sup>7</sup> The Remark continues: “But just as actions, in their external existence [*Dasein*], include contingent consequences, so also does *subjective* existence contain an indeterminacy as far as the power and strength of self-consciousness and presence of mind are concerned. This indeterminacy, however, can be taken into account only in connection with imbecility, lunacy, etc., and with childhood, because only such pronounced conditions as these can annul [*aufheben*] the character of thought and free will and allow us to deny the agent the dignity [*Ehre*] of being a thinking individual and a will.”

<sup>8</sup> Examples are Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), Kittay and Carlson, eds., *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Wiley, 2010), Stacy Simplicity, *The Capacity Contract: Intellectual Disability and the Question of Citizenship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), Barbara Arneil and Nancy J. Hirschmann, eds., *Disability and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. I: Introduction and the Concept of Religion. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson. Translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of J. P. Fitzner and H. S. Harris. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, 337-39; and Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. III: The Consummate Religion. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson. Translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985, 147-48. Excerpts are provided by Wendte in his chapter.

are here concerned” (the original lecture notes are similar<sup>10</sup>). The *Encyclopedia Logic* does not explicitly mention disability but has a strikingly similar passage to the one in the *Philosophy of Right*: Editorial additions from the *Encyclopaedia Logic* do not explicitly mention “the cripple” again, but are similar enough in their phrasing that we can make the connection: “a bad State or a sick body may exist all the same, but they are ‘untrue’ because their concept and their reality do not correspond to one another” (Hegel 1991b, §135A)<sup>11</sup>; “It may certainly be correct that someone is ill, or has stolen something; but a content like this is not ‘true,’ for an ill body is not in agreement with the concept of life, and similarly theft is an action that does not correspond to the concept of human action” (§172A).<sup>12</sup> These situate disability conceptually as an unwanted contingency that need not be understood on its own, as something ‘untrue.’<sup>13</sup>

These examples also prefigure the medical model in assuming disabilities to be contingent natural deficiencies belonging to individuals. But we should ask how ugliness and disability (“the cripple”) are positioned here – committing a crime or having an acute illness that comes and goes may be different from bodily features that become integrated into someone’s regular habits, gait, and social identity.<sup>14</sup> What we might ask is why *shouldn’t* the concept of a human being include a disabled body? Disability is something that could happen to anyone at any time and will happen to most of us if we live long enough. Disability experience has provoked significant and insightful reflections on the human condition and been a reality for many of our artists, poets, philosophers, scientists. The concept of humanity only *excludes* disability if we decide it does, if we make an artificial cut; what happens if we acknowledge that it could be more inclusive than we had thought? Hegelian concepts develop through history; the concept of humanity is no different. [10:00] A concept of humanity that assumes nondisability is the result of an *abstraction* of the human, leading to only a partial truth.

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<sup>10</sup> “Deficiency” is the English translation of *Mangel*, which can also be translated as “defect” or “lack.” The original lecture notes from K.G. Griesheim separate out the “deficient” cases into two clusters: “But the ugliest man, [and] the criminal, is still a human being. An invalid, a cripple, is still a living human being...” (Hegel 1974, 633).

<sup>11</sup> This is an addition to the description of the immediate relationship between whole and parts, in the “Relationship” section of “Appearance” in the “Doctrine of Essence.”

<sup>12</sup> This is an addition to the description of “The Qualitative Judgment” in the section on “The Subjective Concept,” part of “The Doctrine of the Concept.” Further examples of invocations of something bad or unwanted as “untrue” are §24A, p.60; §173A; and §213A.

<sup>13</sup> One more reference that I won’t have time to discuss: In the *Anthropology*, he states that the human voice “is the principal way in which a human being discloses his interior” and then goes on, in the same paragraph, to point out that “Blind people are particularly attentive to the symbolism of the human voice” (PM §401Z [77-78]); in other words, he acknowledges the existence of blindness but not deafness or muteness. Even though schools for the deaf were on the rise, and a deaf identity beginning to form, Hegel doesn’t acknowledge deafness or sign language, even during the lengthy discussion of language (PM §459Z), or when he states that intelligence is revealed through speech (PM §459Z [198]).

<sup>14</sup> This is not to say that illness or criminality cannot also become social identities in their own way!

This argument is can be read as compatible with Hegel's Remark in the *Philosophy of Right* that a demand for equality is an empty demand coming from an abstraction of the human; for Hegel the difference between human beings contributes to their organic interconnection.<sup>15</sup> Of course, as I will argue, even if we do not demand that everyone be the *same*, we might still have work to do to insure everyone is *included*.

Using a disability lens we can note places where disability is functioning even without being named. One of these is poverty and participation in the system of needs. The *Philosophy of Spirit* refers to participation being affected by "skill, chance, and choice" (PS §527). In the *Philosophy of Right*, "chance" is expanded, with Hegel noting that some are poor because of "contingent physical factors and circumstances based on external conditions" (PR §241; see also PR §200<sup>16</sup>). What is a "contingent physical factor" that would limit someone's participation in the system of needs, or labour market? Surely the main thing that Hegel must have in mind here is some form of physical disability or chronic illness – and certainly disabled people still have a much higher unemployment rate than nondisabled people.<sup>17</sup>

Hegel's invocation of "contingent physical factors" suggests an implicit theory that there is, in a sense, 'nothing to be done' about disability (if it cannot be healed or fixed), and that it is self-evident

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<sup>15</sup> "The spirit's objective *right of particularity*, which is contained within the Idea, does not cancel out [*nicht aufhebt*] the inequality of human beings in civil society – an inequality posited by nature, which is the element of inequality – but in fact produces it out of the spirit itself and raises it to an inequality of skills, resources, and even of intellectual and moral education. To oppose this right with a demand for *equality* is characteristic of the empty understanding, which mistakes this abstraction and *obligation* of its own for the real and rational. This sphere of particularity imagines that it is universal, but in its merely relative identity with the universal, it retains both natural and arbitrary particularity, and hence the remnants of the state of nature. In addition, that reason which is immanent in the system of human needs and their movement articulates this system into an organic whole composed of different elements" (PR §200 Remark). I also acknowledge Rosalind Diprose's concern that "while Hegel attempts to account for difference, his assumption of a social unity means that ethical relations are based on the sameness of bodies as well as consciousness. Rosalind Diprose, "In Excess: The Body and the Habit of Sexual Difference," *Hypatia* vol. 6, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 161.

<sup>16</sup> "The *possibility* of sharing in the universal resources – i.e., of holding *particular* resources – is, however, *conditional* on one's own immediate basic assets (i.e., capital) on the one hand, and upon one's skill on the other; the later in turn is itself conditioned by the former, but also by contingent circumstances whose variety gives rise to *differences* in the *development* of natural physical and mental [*geistigen*] aptitudes which are already unequal in themselves [*für sich*]. In this sphere of particularity, these differences manifest themselves in every direction and at every level, and, in conjunction with other contingent and arbitrary circumstances, necessarily result in *inequalities in the resources and skills* of individuals."

<sup>17</sup> In Canada in 2011, the employment rate of disabled Canadians aged 25 to 64 was 49%, compared with 79% for nondisabled Canadians. The rates are more similar for university graduates, but university itself is inaccessible for many disabled Canadians. In Finland in 2013, the employment rate for disabled people aged 15 to 64 is 60.8 (compared to 47.3% for the EU as a whole), compared with 73.2% for nondisabled people in Finland.

(<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6181592/3-02122014-BP-EN.pdf/aefdf716-f420-448f-8cba-893e90e6b460>)

that they would be excluded from ‘normal’ work. This reflects a fairly common assumption even now. It assumes a concept of humanity that excludes disability, in which disability is aberration. Disability activists and theorists however argue that the exclusion of disabled people is unjust.

In an editorial addition drawn from lectures, we have “No one can assert a right against nature, but within the conditions of society hardship at once assumes the form of a wrong inflicted on this or that class” (PR §244A).<sup>18</sup>

Following the social model of disability, we might interpret this to mean that no one can assert that a particular *impairment* is a source of injustice per se, that the absence of accommodation and the inaccessible structure of the built, lived environment is unjust: it is the result of social choices that rest on a particular *conception of what kinds of bodies matter*, and could be otherwise – particularly with an expanded concept of the human. “Contingent physical factors” are only contingent on one level; how they get conceptualized and understood as part of an interdependent community is different.<sup>19</sup> Many disabled people are wholly able to participate in the labour force and the community, provided places are accessible.<sup>20</sup>

Continuing with a disability lens, we might also ask about the nature of participation in the system of needs. Hegel criticizes civil society for ultimately creating a level of poverty that it cannot wholly solve. But what if we take a cue from disability activism and ask whether we can expand our conception of participation, in order to take it beyond the economic. Hegel notes participation in the system of needs is the source of “their *ethical integrity*, their recognition, and their *honour*” (PS

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<sup>18</sup> From addition: “This in turn gives rise to the evil that the rabble do not have sufficient honour to gain their livelihood through their own work, yet claim that they have a right to receive their livelihood. No one can assert a right against nature, but within the conditions of society hardship at once assumes the form of a wrong inflicted on this or that class” (PR §244A)

<sup>19</sup> What if we think of lights as accessibility devices for sighted people? or chairs as accessibility devices for people who do not have their own wheelchairs? why should some be seen as ‘obvious’ and others not?

<sup>20</sup> Some evidence of contingency: Within the EU, employment rates for disabled people range from 29.8% in Ireland to 69% for Switzerland. The largest differences between disabled and nondisabled people were in Hungary and the Netherlands – 37.4 percentage points; the smallest was in Luxembourg, with only 2.4 percentage points difference. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6181592/3-02122014-BP-EN.pdf/aefdf716-f420-448f-8cba-893e90e6b460>

§527). Might it be possible to find these, to find recognition, in other ways, through other forms of relationship?<sup>21</sup> Could we use Hegelian resources to articulate these?

Returning to those “contingent physical factors” – what exactly is contingent here? The dominant model, as discussed earlier, takes disability to be a biomedical fact, understood separately from the social. If we take the brief invocation of disability in the *Philosophy of Right* and connect it with the Anthropology section of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, we can start to see a more complex story emerging. For Hegel, the body is made over by spirit as we grow, develop, and acquire bodily habits (see e.g. §411). There is an aspect of the body remains untouched by work of spirit; we might liken this to impairment (§412Z)<sup>22</sup>. In the case of congenital physical or sensory disabilities, the body that is made over by spirit is a disabled body, but the habits that likewise develop are habits that allow the agent to exercise their freedom in the world, and often to maneuver quite nimbly. In the case of acquired physical or sensory disabilities, the transition and development of new habits may be complicated by an experience of loss, but nonetheless occurs over time. [15 min]

For Hegel, our bodily behaviour is shaped by education and cultivation. He makes this claim at various points, such as in saying we should be more *alike* in our gait,<sup>23</sup> and that idiosyncrasy is often the mark of one less cultivated (PS §395 [p. 50]).<sup>24</sup> But if we pursue a slightly different path, we can

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<sup>21</sup> Ref. e.g. Sunaura Taylor, “The Right not to Work: Power and Disability,” *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, vol. 55 no. 10 (March 2004), <https://monthlyreview.org/2004/03/01/the-right-not-to-work-power-and-disability/>

<sup>22</sup> “The soul’s pervasion of its bodiliness in considered in the two previous Paragraphs is not *absolute*, does not completely sublimate the difference of soul and body. On the contrary, the nature of the logical Idea, developing everything from itself, requires that this difference still be given its due. Something of bodiliness remains, therefore, purely organic and consequently withdrawn from the power of the soul, so that the soul’s pervasion of its body is only one side of the body. The soul, when it comes to feel this limitation of its power, reflects itself into itself and expels bodiliness from itself as something *alien* to it.”

<sup>23</sup> “The movement of the lower extremities, gait, is also very significant. Above all things, gait must be cultivated; in it the soul must betray its mastery over the physical body. But not merely cultivation and the lack of it, but also slackness, an affected manner, vanity, hypocrisy, etc., on the one hand, and orderliness, modesty, good sense, candour, etc., on the other, express themselves in the peculiar style of walking; so that it is easy to distinguish people from one another by their gait” (PM §411Z [39]).

<sup>24</sup> “Now first of all we must remark that it is in the individual soul that the sphere of the contingent begins, for only the universal is the necessary. Individual souls are distinguished from each other by an infinite number of contingent modifications. But this infinity belongs to the bad kind of infinite. One should not therefore rate the particularity of people too highly. ... The peculiarity of children is tolerated within the family circle; but at school begins a life subject to universal regulations, to a rule common to all; at school the mind must be induced to lay aside its idiosyncrasies, to know and to will the universal, to accept the current universal culture. This reshaping of the soul, this alone is what education means. The more cultivated a man is, the less his behavior exhibits anything peculiar to him, anything therefore contingent. Now the peculiarity of the individual has various aspects. These are distinguished as the determinations of *predisposition, temperament, and character*. ... In a time of greater cultivation, the various contingent mannerisms of conduct and action disappear, and with them the varieties of temperament...” (PS §395 pp. 50-51).

*keep* the claim about the degree to which bodies are shaped by cultivation (and so there are no purely contingent physical factors), while challenging the imperative to conformity. This means that the key Hegelian objective is coming to *know* and freely inhabit our bodies, not to have perfect ones. (Note the variation in life explored within the *Philosophy of Nature*!)

Speaking of “contingent physical factors” as an explanation for something is only a partial story on Hegel’s own terms. We can take the account of bodily cultivation from the *Anthropology* and read it back into the *Philosophy of Right*, and ask about how cultivation is thought at a community level, and how the community might work on access together as a cultivation of inclusive shared habits. One of the key questions in disability theory at the moment is the relationship of the body and the social; Hegel helps us to resist the either/or. The disability lens, meanwhile, encourages us toward new questions and interpretations of Hegel’s text.

Disability is not merely a medical event that occurs in a life (though it is that!), but also a creation of a particular way of ordering the world. Thinking with disability invites a rethinking of existing categories and metaphysics, in the mode that Hegel invites in additions to the Introduction of the *Philosophy of Nature* – as he says, “every educated consciousness has its metaphysics, an instinctive way of thinking, the absolute power within us of which we become master only when we make it in turn the object of our knowledge” (PN §246Z [11]). When we perform this analysis of our consciousness we have the chance to rethink it. For Hegel, revolutions in science and history were the result of our consciousness having “changed its categories, comprehending itself more truly, more deeply, more intimately, and more in unity with itself” (PN §246Z [11]). Thinking with disability forces us out of ableist assumptions about what humans *ought* to be like (this connects as well with important work on Hegel and gender and race). (It also opens up questions about teleology and life, which I don’t have room for here.)

What’s the alternative? The alternative – which sadly is supported by many passages of Hegel’s text! – is that there are some people that Hegel is just fine excluding from recognition, honour, dignity. (This also, of course, connects to his comments on race and gender). Pursuing this, however, does not seem that interesting, philosophically speaking, nor that helpful in articulating the ongoing relevance of Hegel’s social theory for today. It is much more enticing to follow the spirit of his system, to explore a fuller sense of the human.

Thinking with disability requires all parts of Hegel's system and thus demonstrates their interconnection. If we look merely at the explicit mentions, we may be tempted just to leave disability as a brute fact of nature which affects participation in society; to understand disability in Hegel, we must look further at the places where our bodies are shaped, where our attitudes around normalcy and contingency are formed, at the places where we are invited to rethink our metaphysics. Disability thus works as a locus where we see the interweaving and layering of different aspects of Hegel's system. If our truest understanding of freedom is not the abstract freedom of indeterminately being able to do whatever, but a concrete freedom that situates us in particular physical, social, and historical circumstances, then we need to think through disabled freedom in its determinacy in order to be sure we have thought it adequately, and not imported ableist conceptions of an idealized body. This paper has just sketched a beginning.

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<sup>i</sup> "The *first* of these three main forms, the quite indeterminate submergence in oneself, appears at first as *imbecility*. This takes different forms. There is *natural* imbecility. This is incurable. Particularly what is called *cretinism* belongs here, a state that is partly sporadic in its occurrence and partly endemic in certain regions, especially in narrow valleys and marshy places. Cretins are misshapen, deformed people, often afflicted with goitre; conspicuous by a completely stupid facial expression; their undeveloped soul often cannot go beyond entirely inarticulate sounds.--But besides this natural imbecility we also find an imbecility into which someone descends by undeserved misfortune or by his own fault. With regard to the former case, *Pinel* cites the example of a congenital imbecile whose dull-wittedness was believed to be the result of an extremely severe fright which her mother had had when she was pregnant with her. Imbecility is often a consequence of *frenzy*, in which case cure becomes highly improbable; *epilepsy*, too, often terminates in the state of imbecility. But the same state is no less frequently brought on by excess of dissipation.--With regard to the appearance of imbecility we can also mention that it occasionally reveals itself as *cataplexy*, as a complete paralysis of both corporeal and mental activity.--Incidentally, imbecility occurs not merely as a permanent state, but also as a transitory state. An Englishman, e.g., sank into indifference to all things, first to politics and then to his own affairs and to his family. He would sit quietly, looking straight in front of him and for years did not speak a word, and showed an insensitivity that made it doubtful whether he knew his wife and children or not. He was cured when someone else, dressed exactly like him, sat opposite him and imitated him in everything he did. This threw the patient into a violent frenzy which forced him to attend to things outside of him and drove him permanently out of his self-absorption." - *Philosophy of Mind* §408Z p. 123 (trans. W. Wallace and A.V. Miller, revised Michael Inwood).