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### The Normative Dimension in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

In spite of its reputation as defending the passive affirmation of the status quo, I argue that the political philosophy Hegel outlines in *The Philosophy of Right* offers the conceptual tools for judging, criticizing and ultimately transforming that status quo insofar as the latter exemplifies an irrational social order. Using Marcuse's theory of political action in *Reason and Revolution*, I argue that in an irrational social order, the citizens themselves have a direct role in constituting the objective rationality of their social world, not merely relying on the "intrinsic rationality" of existing institutions. Although this introduces an element of uncertainty and instability into an otherwise stable social order, I argue that such political action is requisite for the development of freedom. Hegel himself offers a criterion for objective rationality, consisting in basic liberties, the satisfaction of material needs, and the containment of the destructive forces of civil society. Instead of acquiescing to an unjust social order, citizens have a responsibility – in the name of the dialectical development of freedom and rationality – to transform their social order, for it is ultimately beholden to the standards critical and negating reason sets forth.