Recognition and the Human Life-Form

Beyond Identity and Difference

Heikki Ikäheimo

Chapter 5

Axel Honneth

The Recognition Paradigm Between Universalism and Historicism

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

5 Axel Honneth

The Recognition Paradigm Between Universalism and Historicism

Contents

5 Axel Honneth: the recognition paradigm between universalism and historicism

Axel Honneth's work represents, without doubt, the most ambitious effort so far to make recognition explicitly a core concept in social and political thought. With Honneth, recognition is elevated into a centre point of what is often seen as a distinctive new paradigm of thought. Working in the "Frankfurt School" critical theory tradition, Honneth aims to amalgamate elements of the thought of the previous generations of the Frankfurt school—from Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno to Jürgen Habermas—with a conception of social reality that emphasizes the role of social struggles in it. Honneth criticizes the first-generation Frankfurt school thinkers for their lack of a proper conception of social interaction

and wants to introduce a richer and more agonistic picture of interaction than the one found in Habermas's language-centred theory of rationality, morality, and politics. He draws on aspects of Michel Foucault's theorizing of societies as arenas of strategic battle between individuals and groups, yet he is critical of Foucault's eventual reduction of strategic interactions into anonymous processes of "power" and conceives of social struggles in a way that differs decisively from the Hobbesian model of strategic battles for power or self-interest:, namely as morally motivated "struggles for recognition".[1]

Honneth originally formulated his account of recognition and its role in social, political, and individual life in a 1992 monograph *Kampf um Anerkennung. Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte*, based on his *Habilationschrift* and published in English as *The Struggle for Recognition—The Grammar of Social Conflicts* in 1995.[2] He has subsequently revised and reformulated many of his ideas in a large number of books and articles, including reconstructive essays on thinkers that he sees as important predecessors of or allies for his own project, and applied his recognition-theoretical view to analyzing developments in contemporary capitalism.

Since *The Struggle for Recognition*, Hegel has been of central importance for Honneth's work. In this book, Honneth initially develops the idea of morally motivated struggles of recognition driving social progress through a reconstruction of Hegel's social and political philosophy—however not that of the mature Hegel of the *Encyclopaedia* discussed in Chapter 3, but the younger Hegel of the so-called Jena period between 1800 and 1807. Honneth elaborates further on Hegel's thoughts on the nature and importance of recognition and the struggles for it and looks for empirical support for them by drawing on George Herbert Mead's social psychology and strands in psychoanalysis and developmental psychology as well as in contemporary legal and political theory, sociology, and other more empirical disciplines.

In what follows, I will not discuss Honneth's reconstruction of Hegel's thought[3] but will first present the outlines of Honneth's own account of the significance of recognition for human life in *The Struggle for Recognition*, focusing especially on certain unresolved tensions or ambivalences in it that are arguably also behind some of the subsequent developments of his work discussed later in this chapter. In the final part of the chapter, I will discuss Honneth's more recent monograph *Freedom's Right*, in which freedom instead of recognition is the master concept yet in which recognition in several senses of the term still plays an important role. Honneth's work on recognition contains a number of exceptionally fruitful ideas for further development, and the point of discussing problems and ambivalences in it, similarly to the discussions in the previous chapters, is not to question its value but rather to take on board what it can teach us and elaborate further on what remains unclear or inadequately developed in it.[4]

5.1 A formal theory of the good life

In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth sets himself an ambitious task. He wants to think of social progress as taking place through social struggles or movements motivated by moral experiences of lack of adequate or appropriate recognition. He also wants to outline a "formal concept of the good life" which both provides a criterion for critically evaluating different social orders and is the implicit *telos* of genuinely emancipatory or progressive social struggles and movements. The fact that Honneth's project has significance simultaneously for political, social, and moral philosophy distinguishes it from Fraser's exclusively political philosophical focus, and its level of conceptual elaboration and empirical substantiation makes it stand out in comparison with both Taylor's and Fraser's accounts of recognition.[5]

An important guiding principle behind Honneth's project is the Hegelian idea of *immanent critique*: critical social philosophy should not appeal to standards of criticism that are external to the forms of life it criticizes or evaluates; it should rather locate such standards in these forms themselves. This imperative has both epistemic and practical aspects. From an epistemic point of view, social philosophy as finite human activity possesses no God's-eye viewpoint from or *a priori* privileged criteria with which it could judge the relative merits of different social orders beyond what intelligent people living in those orders would in principle, on serious reflection, be themselves capable of endorsing.[6] From a practical point of view, if critical social thought is to make a difference in the world, it needs to be able to appeal to explicit or implicit convictions, intuitions, or commitments of ordinary people and to articulate them in a way that can help to unleash inchoate motivations for emancipatory political movements and struggles. For Honneth, the idea of the constitutive need for recognition provides an anchor point for such an immanently critical, epistemically justified, and politically effective form of critical theory.

Why do humans need recognition? Honneth finds in an embryonic form in the young Hegel, and later spelled out in less "metaphysical" terms in George Herbert Mead, the idea that human persons owe their self-conception to recognition from others. Honneth later distances himself from some of the details of Mead's conception,[7] but the basic idea remains: a subject's conception of herself is first built by internalizing evaluative or normative conceptions about oneself entailed in the recognition of one, or lack of it, by relevant others. Though Honneth often uses the term "identity", he in fact does not mainly mean by it qualitative features that distinguish an individual (or group) from others—as Taylor and Fraser do—but three practical self-conceptions or "self-relations" that I will discuss below in Chapter 5.3.[8] This also means that Fraser's description of the "identity model" of recognition (see Chapter 4.2.1) does not capture well what he is after.

Despite this difference, there is a strong psychological emphasis in Honneth in that he conceives of the motivation for emancipatory struggles and the criteria of a good society centrally in psychological terms. It is only

by experiencing oneself as the object of recognition by others that one can build (in childhood and youth) and maintain (in adult life) a positive self-conception, which is a central psychological resource needed for leading a flourishing life. Experiences of lacking adequate recognition can be deeply painful, but they can also provide a potential source of motivation which—when appropriately articulated and collectively organized—may lead to political "struggles for recognition".

Such struggles for recognition are *morally* motivated since appropriate recognition is the central moral claim that persons present each other with in interaction. The implicit *telos* of these struggles—one which those engaging in the struggles are often not explicitly conscious of but which the social philosopher can rationally reconstruct—is a good society, which means a society in which claims for recognition are adequately fulfilled, thus enabling the development and maintenance of positive self-relations and therefore flourishing individual life and self-realization. Notably, though Honneth conceives of the psychological constitution of the human person as deeply social, his evaluative standard for a good society is decidedly individualistic. The standard by which communities and societies can and should be critically evaluated on Honneth's account is the extent to which they provide the social conditions for developing adequate psychological resources for individual flourishing.

A central claim in Honneth's project is that this is a merely "*formal* concept of the good life",[9] one that is not bound to any particular cultural or historical set of values. It refers only to "structural" requirements of the kinds of social relations that support individual self-realization *in any society*. Honneth furthermore suggests that it is an implicit ideal in all of them. Or, as he puts it, it can be "normatively extracted from the plurality of all particular forms of life"[10] as an implicit criterion of the goodness of social relations and interactions that, in principle, individuals inhabiting any of them could, on reflection, agree on.[11]

If Honneth's conception of the good life and thus of a good society really succeeds in being "formal" in this sense, then it refutes Fraser's *a priori* claim that any appeal to the concept of the good life is necessarily an expression of one particular contestable vision among others and hence cannot claim universal validity. Many commentators, however, have attacked Honneth's claim that his model of the good life is shared by "all particular forms of life" with the objection that the ideal of *individual self-realization* is specific to European modernity and by no means shared by all other cultures.[12] Interestingly, rather than trying to systematically defend the claim for universality of his formal conception of the good life, Honneth has shown considerable hesitation on this issue throughout his writings since *The Struggle for Recognition*. This may be partly attributable to the fallibilist spirit of his project, to its openness to critique, empirical falsification, improvement, and reformulation.[13] But, as I will show, it also reflects internal tensions in the original formulation of his program. Put briefly, Honneth's position is pulled in two opposite directions, one universalist and the other historicist or relativist, some of his formulations pointing towards the first direction, others towards the second. This ambivalence or

oscillation is closely related to a second ambivalence in Honneth's work, one that he shares with Fichte and Hegel—namely the ambivalence of thinking of recognition as a purely intersubjective phenomenon on the one hand and as an institutionally mediated phenomenon on the other.

5.2 The three dimensions of recognition

One of the most original features of Honneth's conception with regard to the concept of recognition is his explicit differentiation between *three dimensions of recognition*. I have mentioned all three already in the previous chapters: (1) the *deontological* dimension of *respect* in discussing Fichte, (2) the *axiological* dimension of *love* in discussing Hegel, and (3) the *contributive* dimension of *esteem or contributive valuing* in discussing Taylor.[14] Though Honneth himself does not use the terms 'deontological', 'axiological', and 'contributive' for the dimensions, my reference to them in the previous chapters was already influenced by Honneth's original idea. The fact that the distinction so usefully grasps strands in earlier thought on recognition is one of the signs of its fruitfulness. Yet, as we shall see, further differentiations that I have already introduced are not present in Honneth's original formulation.

How the differentiation between the three dimensions works in Honneth's own writing is in outline as follows: Drawing on Hegel, Mead, and other theoretical sources, Honneth argues that there are three basic dimensions of a person's positive self-relation or self-conception, which constitute the basic psychological resources required for successful self-realization and thus individual flourishing: *self-trust*, *self-respect*, and *self-esteem*. These are supported by the three corresponding forms of recognition of *love*, *respect*, and *esteem*, respectively, which in the modern bourgeois-capitalist societies are institutionalized as central norms or moral expectations constitutive of three corresponding spheres of social life, namely the *family and close personal relations*, the realm of *law*, and the realm of *work*.[15] Persons need enough of each of the three forms of recognition to develop sufficient psychological resources for successful self-realization and thus for flourishing individual life.

5.2.1 Love as recognition

The first dimension that Honneth discusses in the book—a dimension which on his account has chronological primacy in human life—is the (axiological) dimension of *love*.[16] Honneth draws heavily on the "object-relational" tradition in psychoanalysis, as well as on more experimental developmental psychology, discussing the early relationship between the mother and the infant as one in which, after an initial phase of relatively undifferentiated unity, both must gradually start accepting the other's independence. Honneth refers explicitly to Hegel's idea of consciousness of oneself in the other (or "being oneself in another"),[17] conceiving of the successful case of the infant's psychosocial development in terms of a "balance between independence and attachment".[18]

Because the human infant is born in the world completely incapable of coping on its own, not only its physiological but also its psychological

development essentially depends on constant care and the experience of being cared for. In Honneth's description, aspects of the earliest phase in the child's relation to the mother resemble Hegel's description of the primitive subject's desiring practical relation to its environment: for the subject, it—the mother or the breast as the immediate object of desire—is there only to satisfy the subject's needs. And analogously to Hegel's idealized developmental story, in the real development of the individual the infant must learn to accept the mother as an independent other subject. This is a potential cause of crisis or struggle in which the infant aggressively tries to dominate the mother whom it desperately needs and fears losing.[19]

By both accepting the mother's independence and experiencing that one is nevertheless loved by the independent mother, the child develops a basic sense of security or trust, a capacity to be alone without a crushing fear of abandonment and death. This basic sense of security or self-trust that forms the core of a healthy psyche allows the individual later in life not only to form trusting relations with others in which she feels at ease without needing to dominate others but also quite generally to realize herself in all areas of life with adequate self-confidence. One feels confident about expressing one's individual needs and acting on them since early in life one has experienced others (the mother or nurturer) affirming their importance through their care or love. Also, one isn't afraid of putting forward one's own views since one has developed a basic confidence that difference or independence of perspectives does not have to mean complete abandonment by others.[20]

Though the original setting of being cared for or loved by an independent other is the relationship between the infant and its mother, this dimension of recognition is on Honneth's account important in any "primary relationships" "constituted by strong emotional attachments among a small number of people".[21] Relationships between close friends as well as those between erotic 'lovers' are settings where love is mutually expected. Yet, in modern bourgeois-capitalist societies, the nuclear family is the primary institutional setting of love—one in which loving relationships are a central constitutive norm.

In terms of the distinction I made in Chapter 1.3 between attitudes, attitude-complexes, concrete interpersonal relationships, and social and institutional spheres, in *The Struggle for Recognition* Honneth conceives of love as recognition not as a single attitude but in terms of a *concrete interpersonal relationship* which ideally instantiates both unity and difference. It does so by virtue of the subjects having suitable kinds of intentional states or attitudes towards each other. What is thus at stake is a *complex of attitudes*, including on the infant's side an acceptance of the mother's independence and a belief or conviction that the independent mother nevertheless loves one. On the mother's side, this involves an acceptance of the child's independence (without which the mother would not be able to react calmly and caringly to the infant's initial anger or rage when it is confronted with the mother's independence) and an attitude of loving care towards the infant. Though there is thus a partial dissymmetry of attitudes in the infant–mother relationship, the idea

is that later in life love relations between adults are expected to be more or less symmetric, instantiating on both sides acceptance of the other's independence, love for the other, knowledge of the other's acceptance of one's independence, and confidence of being loved by the other.

Notably, however, in focusing on the ideal structure of the *concrete relationship* and in discussing the *complex of attitudes* that it consists in, Honneth does not in *The Struggle for Recognition* clearly spell out what exactly the *attitude* of love itself is. What exactly does it mean that the mother loves the child, or that a friend loves someone, in addition to an acceptance of the other's independence—which alone clearly is not yet love? Honneth elaborates on the concept of love in an article 'Love and Morality: On the Moral Content of Emotional Ties',[22] condensing the essential thing into acts "done only for the sake of the individual well-being of another person"[23] or, in other words, into acts motivated by a non-instrumental or "unconditional" concern for the other's well-being. If one abstracts from the acts and focuses only on the motivating attitude, this is the concept of recognition as love that we found implicitly present already in Hegel's developmental story: non-instrumental or unconditional concern for the other's well-being.

Honneth is not completely consistent in the article, however; sometimes he mixes love in this sense with appreciation or valuation of the "qualitative uniqueness" of the other or of the "unique way" in which her "qualities come together".[24] It seems that the main reason for this occasional inconsistency is a lack of a clear distinction between attitudes, attitude-complexes, and concrete relationships. Though one could argue that without the simple attitude of love as unconditional concern for the other a concrete relationship does not really deserve to be called a 'love relationship', as concrete relationships love relationships will inevitably involve many other kinds of intersubjective attitudes as well. Mutual appreciation for each other's qualitative features is usually central to why people become friends, lovers, or life partners and thus an important attitudinal component in such relationships. Yet the attitude of love as unconditional concern for the other's well-being is not conditional on her qualities. To appreciate the complexity of concrete interpersonal relations and to understand the distinct contribution that each of these attitudes makes to them and to subjective well-being, it is arguably better to keep the attitudinal components of love relationships more clearly separate than Honneth himself usually does.[25]

5.2.2 Respect as recognition

Like the axiological dimension of love, the deontological dimension of respect is on Honneth's account essential for the positive development of psychological capacities needed for individual self-realization.[26] Whereas being loved supports self-trust, being respected supports self-respect. A central feature of Honneth's discussion of respect is a close association of respect with institutionalized rights. Though Honneth is not after the kind

of deduction of a system of rights that Fichte attempted and though Hegel rather than Fichte is Honneth's main classical reference, the central idea in Honneth's discussion of respect and rights—namely that having rights is a requirement for having a particular kind of self-relation constitutive of individual freedom—is familiar already from Fichte. Whereas Fichte tried to argue that being respected as a bearer of rights is essential for consciousness of oneself as free, Honneth argues that it is essential for having self-respect which is a central psychological resource needed for successful self-realization. Honneth cites Joel Feinberg's description of the psychological effects of having rights: being respected by others as a rights-holder "enables us to 'stand up like men', to look others in the eye, and to feel in some fundamental way the equal of anyone".[27]

Honneth follows Rudolph von Ihering, T.H. Marshall, and others in reconstructing the specific nature of modern law and thus legal rights. Whereas in traditional societies rights or privileges were tied to particular inherited social positions, in the modern legal order individuals enjoy fundamental equality as juridical persons with the same basic rights and duties, completely independently of which particular role or position in the society they occupy. It is by conceiving of oneself as the legal equal of everyone that an individual enjoys self-respect or feels they can "stand up like [a] m[a] n".[28] Honneth also cites T.H. Marshall's influential interpretation of the three stages of the development of modern rights, according to which, roughly, civil rights granting individuals basic protection of life and property developed in the 18th century, political rights to participate in political will formation (at least for adult males) in the 19th century, and social rights securing material and educational prerequisites for actually exercising one's political rights regardless of social background developed in the 20th century.[29] All of these 'generations' of rights have meant an increase in inclusion and equalization of citizens as full-fledged members of society. As Marshall puts it, it has meant both "an enrichment of the stuff of which the status [of a full citizen or legal person] is made and an increase in the number of those on whom the status is bestowed".[30]

Problematically, however, as is the case with Fichte and Hegel, Honneth's account of the deontological dimension of recognition is ambivalent between the purely intersubjective and institutionally mediated forms of recognition. Whereas Honneth uses the term 'respect' in a way that runs these together, where important I will use a more differentiated nomenclature, calling the first 'respect' and the second 'respect*'. This particular feature of Honneth's account has consequences with regard to his claim of the psychological importance of this dimension of recognition. Whereas Honneth conceives of love as an intersubjective matter between particular persons who are psychologically close to each other, he conceives of what he names respect more impersonally, in a way in which the distinction between the intersubjective and the institutional or institutionally mediated remains unarticulated. In the previous chapters, I contrasted both vertical recognition of individuals by the state in the sense of attribution of rights to

them and the institutionally mediated horizontal recognition between individuals as bearers of institutionalized rights *with* the purely intersubjective forms of recognition, emphasizing the lack of psychological depth of the not-purely-intersubjective forms. Yet, as his approving citation of Feinberg already shows, Honneth in fact thinks that there is an important link between rights on the one hand and psychology or the positive practical self-relations of the rights-holder on the other hand. What is it?

Honneth articulates the link in terms of a central idea in George Herbert Mead's theory of the birth of the socialized subject or "self".[31] On Mead's account, socialization involves learning to see oneself from the perspectives of one's interaction partners, and a central dimension in this process is seeing oneself from the point of view of their normative action expectations. What is at stake are not expectations in the sense of assumptions or hypothesis of how one will act but *normative* expectations in the sense of how the others think one *ought* to act. As the infant's sphere of interaction partners grows, it learns to see itself from the normative point of view of ever more individuals and eventually somehow abstracts from its experience of this plurality of concrete others the normative perspective of the "generalized other".[32]

Honneth explains that the normative expectations of the generalized other are the social norms that "tell one both what one can expect from others and what one is legitimately obliged to do for them"—and further that it is by "internalization" of these expectations that one becomes a "socially accepted member of one's community".[33] A decisive move in Honneth's argument takes place through an application of this Meadian model to the *modern* legal order in particular—interpreted in a specific way. Honneth emphasizes the idea that in modern law rights are ascribed to every human individual "as a free being", or as a morally "responsible person",[34] and that modern law expresses respect for the "freedom of the will of the person".[35] By 'freedom', Honneth refers here to freedom in a very particular, broadly Kantian, 'moral-psychological' sense of having the capacity to judge actions from the point of view of, and thus act on, universalizable moral principles (instead of empirical motives such as emotions which on Kant's account bind humans to the realm of causality). Following von Ihering's Kant-inspired interpretation of modern law, Honneth arrives at an interpretation according to which having rights means, in a modern legal order, to be respected "as a person".

However appealing this formulation may sound, it is more ambiguous than Honneth seems to acknowledge. The term 'person' as Honneth uses it in this context does not distinguish between, on the one hand, personhood in what I have called the *institutional status* sense in which being a person is simply having institutionally guaranteed rights and, on the other hand, personhood and thus freedom in the Kantian moral-psychological sense which centrally involves the *capacity* to judge actions (both one's own and those of others) from the point of view of their universalizability and thus moral acceptability. Whereas in the first case being 'respected' "as a person"

means being respected* as a bearer of rights or, in other words, being acted upon in ways that are in accordance with one's rights or *status* as a rights-bearer, in the second case it means being respected as someone with the (actual or potential) *psychological capacity* of moral personhood and thus, for example, that others may feel ashamed in front of one when one criticizes them for what one judges as morally unacceptable acts. Not explicitly distinguishing between these two issues creates the rhetorical effect either that they are *the same thing*, which they clearly are not, or that respect* for someone as a rights-holder somehow necessarily *implies* respect for her as someone with the psychological capacities of Kantian 'moral-psychological' personhood, which is arguably not the case.

Consider two objections to the latter idea. *First*, as I pointed out in discussing Taylor, not all humans are in fact equal in their capacity for moral judgment or, to formulate this in Mead's terms, equal in their capacity to judge actions and claims from the perspective of the "generalized other". Children are not thought to be "morally responsible" to the same degree as adults are. Even more importantly, some children never develop the psychological capacities of Kantian moral-psychological personhood[36] or the capacities needed for adopting the perspective of the Meadian generalized other. Yet this is usually not thought to be a reason to deny them the protection of basic rights. This is to say that the idea that attribution of rights to individuals implies respect for them as Kantian moral-psychological persons is in fact contradicted by the practical application of rights: attribution of rights to someone and respect* for her as a bearer of rights do not necessarily imply respect for her as free or autonomous in the Kantian sense. Indeed, since applying the principle consistently would exclude people with severe mental disabilities from legal protection, many would find its consistent application completely unacceptable. To put the lesson here in a nutshell: *legal or institutional personhood does not necessarily imply psychological personhood*. I will return to this issue in the concluding chapter, conceiving of these as two relatively distinct 'layers' of full-fledged personhood, together with its third, intersubjective, layer.

Second, though having some rights, such as rights to political participation, is in fact conditional on having an adequate level of rational capacities (only more or less psychologically normal adults are granted them), and though these rights can thus in principle be interpreted according to the idea that attribution of rights implies, or is an expression of, respect for the rights-holders as moral-psychological persons, it is still an empirical question whether individual rights-holders actually interpret having such rights in this way (or indeed whether they have even heard of the idea or understood it). This is to say that having rights and thus being a person in the juridical or institutional sense are by no means necessarily connected in a rights-holder's own view with a conception of herself as a psychological person with a capacity to judge the norms and principles of co-existence, or as a person in the intersubjective sense of being respected as an authority or co-authority over those norms by others.[37]

The upshot of these two points is that though being a person in the institutional sense with an equal package of rights does, without doubt, allow individuals in some important sense to "stand up like men" and to feel "in some fundamental way the equal of everyone", the thought that it by default allows them to feel equal in the sense of authorities on the content of acceptable norms—whether moral or other—holds water neither conceptually nor empirically. Respect* for oneself in the first sense and respect for oneself in the second sense are simply two different practical self-conceptions and the first by no means necessarily leads to, not to mention logically implies, the second.

Though Honneth is, without doubt, after something very important in pointing out the significance of experienced respect by others for self-respect and thus for individual flourishing and though experienced lack of respect can no doubt provide powerful motivation for political struggles, the discussion of this theme in *The Struggle for Recognition* is somewhat lacking in conceptual differentiation. As it stands, it does not distinguish between institutionally mediated respect* and purely intersubjective respect and, as a consequence, between respect* for oneself as someone with rights and respect for oneself as someone with authority on the norms of shared life (including one's rights and those of others).[38] Furthermore, though psychological depth is in principle a distinctive virtue of Honneth's account of recognition, by framing the discussion of the deontological dimension exclusively in the context of institutionalized rights *The Struggle for Recognition* in fact does not clarify much further what Fichte already had in mind but failed to consistently articulate: the role of purely intersubjective respect in the development of individuals into "free rational beings" or persons in the psychological sense. Though these may not be crucial issues for Honneth's project in the book, they are important for a systematic exploration of the importance of recognition in its different forms.

5.2.3 Esteem as recognition

Whereas love relates on Honneth's account to its objects as vulnerable singular beings and whereas respect relates to them as morally responsible beings with equal rights, recognition as "esteem" (*Wertschätzung*) relates to its objects as bearers of particular kinds of qualities and capacities. And whereas love supports the recognizee's basic trust, and respect supports her self-respect, esteem supports her "self-esteem" which is a positive evaluation of one's particular qualities and capacities.[39] Not just any kinds of qualities and capacities are relevant for esteem, however: only those are that others can conceive of as contributing to their life or to something that they value. Why only such qualities? A guiding idea here is something that one finds in Hegel as well as in the young Karl Marx—namely that humans are by their nature cooperative beings or beings whose very existence depends on cooperation or mutual contribution to shared ends. On this line of thought, one of the central aspects of being a full-fledged member of a

human community is being capable of and having the motivation to contribute something to shared ends or the common good, however these may be defined.[40]

As with the deontological dimension of recognition, Honneth stresses the historically changing aspects of esteem or the contributive dimension. He outlines two idealized stages in the history of the latter—the "traditional" or "pre-modern" and the "modern" stage—and a "structural transformation" from the first to the second.[41] Whereas on the collective self-understandings of pre-modern societies the society is made up of a hierarchy of estates whose members have roles and tasks in the social whole preordained by God or the eternal order of things, in the transition to modernity such meta-social explanations and legitimations of the social order gradually lose their credibility.

This transition involves two important changes with regard to the contributive dimension of recognition. First, whereas in the pre-modern order "honor"[42] is attributed to individuals according to their estate, *en masse* as it were, and differences of honour between individuals within an estate only reflect the extent to which this or that individual is considered to realize the values defining of her estate, with the rise of the bourgeoisie this estate-bound "honor" is gradually replaced by increasingly individualized "esteem", which becomes increasingly detached from pre-given social hierarchies. Second, whereas in the pre-modern world the framework or criteria of evaluating the contribution of particular roles, personality features, and activities to the social whole rely on criteria that cannot be questioned, in the transition to modernity they become gradually open to dispute.

It now becomes in principle possible for each individual, independently of social background, to receive esteem for one's individual contribution to the common good. At the same time, however, what the common good consists of and thus what the relative contributive value of particular individual capacities and activities to it is lose their air of self-evidence and become matters of contestation and social struggle. Importantly, Honneth tries to strike a balance between two things: on the one hand, accepting that social esteem for contributions is dependent on the existence of an "intersubjectively shared value-horizon"[43] or, in other words, on an adequately shared conception of the most important shared needs and ends and thus of what would count as valuable contributions; and, on the other hand, emphasizing the openness to contestation and struggle of that value horizon in modernity. A good society allows individuals to realize themselves in ways that can earn them esteem or contributive valuing from others and thus to develop adequate self-esteem. And though it is always possible that the predominant conception of the common good and thus valuable contributions is biased so that it unfairly favours certain kinds of activities and certain groups over others, a good society in principle allows for a constant contestation and redefinition of the content of the common good. It, therefore, in principle though of course not always in practice, provides everyone with a chance, sufficiently free of unfair bias, to be esteemed for one's

contributions to the common good and thus to experience oneself as a valued member of the society.

As we saw in 4.2.1, Fraser claims that on Honneth's model "everyone is morally entitled to social esteem".[44] This is clearly not what Honneth means. What he is after are conditions in which contributions are fairly evaluated and where everyone, regardless of social background or other external factors, stands a chance of being esteemed—assuming that she actually has something esteem-worthy to contribute.

An important question that Honneth's discussion of the contributive dimension of recognition and of the formal concept of the good life in *The Struggle for Recognition* does, however, not fully or unambiguously answer is what exactly esteem is. What exactly is it to value someone for her contributions to the good of others or to the common good? One problem stands out especially: esteem or contributive valuing looks conspicuously like valuing the other *instrumentally* or 'instrumentalizing' her for the common good. Yet Honneth emphasizes that expectations of recognition are *moral* expectations. Whether or not instrumentalizing others is an inevitable part of life or whether or not we expect it in human relations, the idea that not to be instrumentalized by others would violate a *moral* expectation seems odd. The young Marx thought that the fact that both workers and those who consume their products are forced to think of each other (and themselves) in instrumental terms is an essential element of the "alienated" nature of life under capitalism and something that gives it an immoral character.[45] It is not clear how Honneth's account handles the possible critique that esteem is simply instrumental valuing and thus not something people *morally* expect from each other, but perhaps something that they merely accept as an unavoidable fact of life, whether in general or in particular conditions, such as in wage labour under the conditions of capitalism.

But is there a form of contributive valuing that is not instrumentalizing? There is indeed. Think of *gratitude*, which I already hinted at discussing Fraser and the idea of social inclusion. If A values B for his positive contributions to something that is of value for A yet A is not grateful to B, this means that A values B instrumentally. Perhaps A is not 'instrumentalizing' or 'using' B in the sense of forcing him to do what A wants, but nevertheless A's *attitude* towards B is one of instrumental valuing and thus an 'instrumentalizing' attitude: A values B as a means to an end. Sometimes instrumental valuing without gratitude is the appropriate attitude, sometimes it is not. To the extent that B does what she does *because* she wants something in return, such as a financial reward, or salary if he is a wage labourer, she wants precisely that A would value her deed instrumentally, as serving some end or purpose of A's, and that he would thus have a motive to pay for it. If, in contrast, B is not acting because she wants something in return, and thus not 'for her (B's) own sake', but is acting rather 'for A's own sake', out of intrinsic concern for A's good or well-being, she usually expects something else: namely gratitude. This does not mean that B is acting *because* she wants A's gratitude, for then she would not be acting for A's sake and thus

would not *deserve* gratitude. It is precisely the fact that only (sufficiently) unselfish action deserves gratitude that gives a genuine, non-devious expectation for gratitude a specifically *moral* character.[46] And it is this specifically *moral* logic that distinguishes altruistic (or loving) contributions, to which the appropriate or expected response is gratitude, from the *economic* logic of actions in expectation for reward, to which the appropriate or expected response is instrumental valuing.[47]

The focus of Honneth's discussion of the contributive dimension of recognition is the institutional sphere of social reproduction and work, and his central argument is that struggles for a fair remuneration for work, as well as struggles for certain forms of activity such as housework to be acknowledged as socially useful "work" in the first place,[48] are not (or at least not only) strategic struggles for material advantage but (at least partly) fuelled by moral expectations for appropriate esteem or contributive valuing by the other members of the society. Yet, if we assume that the central institutional expression or embodiment of esteem in bourgeois-capitalist societies is the wages, this evokes a difficult question: how to understand expectations for remuneration for work as *moral* expectations. The moral logic of gift and gratitude is not fitting here since it both rules out expectation for remuneration and makes remuneration the wrong or inappropriate response.[49] If this is so, in what way can expectations, demands, and struggles for a fair wage then have a moral character at all?

This is not an issue that Honneth has elaborated on, but there are at least two ways of trying to do so. The *first* one takes us to a theme that becomes more explicit in Honneth's exchange with Nancy Fraser in their co-authored book *Recognition or Redistribution?*, namely the "achievement principle".[50] Honneth conceives of this as a modern bourgeois principle, namely the principle that capacities and achievements of individuals ought to be valued and remunerated according to their value for the common good, independently of the contributors' social background. Though there may be nothing morally dignified in being valued instrumentally as such, there is, on this line of thought, in being instrumentally valued under a fair principle that one approves of. Add to this the experience that one is respected as someone who shares authority with others on the content and correct application of the contribution principle, and there is an element in the picture that can be characterized as moral: even if the demand for remuneration, as vital as it is for the worker, does not have a distinctively moral quality, the implicit demand to be respected as sharing authority on the principles of remuneration does. This latter (implicit or explicit) demand is simply the demand to be respected as a person in the sense of a co-authority on the norms of co-existence and cooperation. Realistically, in the context of capitalist wage labour, labour market, or labour relations, authority to influence the terms of the relations tends to be mostly conditional—dependent on each actor's relative bargaining power. Yet expectations to have a fair say in this area are often formulated by workers in terms of respect or, in other words, the unconditional mode of attribution of authority—and this

suggests that there are *also* moral expectations involved, just as Honneth thinks there are.[51]

Note, however, that this line of thought actually moves the specifically *moral* quality of recognition for contributions from the contributive dimension to the deontological dimension of norms, authority, and respect. It is now in fact the deontological dimension that gives demands for fair remuneration a moral element, whereas the expected mode of valuing the worker for his contributions is simply instrumental valuing. If this means that this valuing is itself not a form of recognition—since, according to Honneth, recognition is something expectations for which are moral expectations—then in his own terms Honneth has in fact not introduced a third independent form or dimension of recognition at all.

There is, however, a *second* way to think of expectations, demands, and struggles for a fair wage as having a moral character. This is to consider the moral logic of altruistic or loving contributions and gratitude as an aspect of them. On this line of thought, *gratitude* is the third attitude of recognition that gives the contributive dimension independence as a dimension of recognition.[52] Like all human action and interaction, work can be motivated by a variety of motives which vary in, among other things, terms of their moral character. An obvious motive to work is to earn a livelihood for oneself and one's dependents, a motive which is conditional on remuneration and thus 'selfish'. But there are other motives to work as well, among them the genuinely unselfish wish to contribute to the life of one's fellow men or citizens (beyond one's immediate family) for their sake. For the young Marx, an essential difference between alienated and non-alienated work is that whereas in alienated conditions (capitalism in short) both the worker and the consumer relate to each other instrumentally, merely from the point of view of their own needs, non-alienated conditions of work (present in communism) allow for the worker to relate to the consumers of his products, as Honneth puts it, with "a kind of loving affirmation" of their neediness.[53] In other words, it allows for the worker to be motivated, also, by intrinsic concern for other people as consumers of the fruits of his labour, and the work activity hence to be, at least partly, an altruistic or loving contribution to their good or well-being. Interestingly, Honneth notes that Marx later gave up this model of altruistic cooperation and thereby lost a connection between his model and Hegel's concept of recognition.[54] Strikingly, there is no sign that Honneth would utilize the idea himself, and it is not obvious why this is so.

Marx's idea can, of course, be criticized as romantic utopianism in large modern societies where in most forms of work the connection of the work activity and consumption, and thus of the worker and consumer, is usually so distant and abstract that it is difficult for the worker to have any clear idea of the consumers and thus any particular attitude, loving or otherwise, towards them. Yet this is certainly not true of all forms of work. Especially in domestic work within the family but also in the professions of care work or education, there is in fact a strong expectation that the worker has at

least *some* intrinsic concern for the well-being of the beneficiaries of their work. And though it might be unrealistic to expect too much of such motives in many other forms of work, completely ruling them out from all other forms seems unnecessarily and unjustifiably cynical. This would mean ruling out *a priori* that workers outside these sectors *ever* felt they are doing something good for their fellow men and women in their work, or contributing to the society, and doing this *not merely* for personal gain. It would also mean ruling out *a priori* that there is *ever* genuine reason for gratitude for work done outside the mentioned sectors. It does seem rather uncontroversial that *not all* expectations of 'recognition' for contributions in the realm of work outside these sectors are *exclusively* expectations for financial reward, that some of them also include expectations for gratitude. Where this is the case, the moral logic involved in the expectations gives them a specifically moral character.[55]

When we now combine the two ways to think of how demands for fair remuneration can have a moral element, the result is a more nuanced picture of the possible motivations and expectations that can be at issue wherever individuals or groups demand or struggle for 'recognition' for their contribution to the society. Since we are centrally talking about wage labour, a central ingredient is of course expectation for instrumental valuing of one's contribution and thus appropriate remuneration for it. But, in addition, there may be two other ingredients that, unlike the first, have a clear moral quality characteristic (following Honneth) of genuinely recognitive phenomena: (1) an expectation for respect for oneself and one's peers as co-authorities on the content and fair application of the contribution principle, and (2) an expectation for gratitude to the extent that the motivation to work also includes genuine unselfish concern for the beneficiaries of the work activity or consumers of its products. Though mere remuneration without gratitude is not an appropriate response to the last-mentioned motive, there is no obvious reason to rule out the possibility that in appropriate circumstances remuneration can be accompanied with, and interpreted by the recipients, as being accompanied with gratitude.

There is, however, still a problem: given that in large societies workers and the consumers of their products have often, or mostly, no personal contact with each other and little or no knowledge of each other as individual persons, it may seem problematic to think of them as having any attitudes whatsoever towards each other. This brings us back to the theme of *imagination* that I took up in discussing Fraser's account. In brief:, in large societies, one can only imagine most of one's fellow members of society but never actually meet most of them.[56] Hence, it makes a difference for one's sense of membership in the society *how* one imagines the fellow members. As attitudes of recognition are central in all human relations, they clearly are so also in these relationships largely based on imagination. More to the point in the present context: what attitudes I have towards others enjoying the products of my labour as I imagine them, or what attitudes I imagine them to have towards the producers of those products such as me, clearly make an important

difference to how meaningful, gratifying, or non-alienating I am likely to experience my working life to be. Compare, for example, a construction worker who knows that he is building a well-designed, good-quality dwelling in which he can imagine families living in safety and comfort and one who knows that the house he is building is merely meant for making a quick buck for the developer and will start decaying as soon as its finished, thus landing families who have purchased homes in it in serious trouble.[57] Even if one would find the young Marx's sketch of non-alienation in conditions of communism to be romantic and simplifying, this much can surely be granted to him: it makes a difference for a worker whether she can expect the consumers of her labour to end up imagining the producers and thus indirectly him with gratitude or, say, with hate.

5.3 The two layers of recognition in Honneth

At the end of 5.1, I mentioned Honneth's hesitation concerning the trans-cultural and trans-historical validity of his "formal conception" of the good life. This issue is closely related to an ambiguity or tension in his work between thinking of recognition as a purely intersubjective matter on the one hand and thinking of it as mediated by institutionalized norms or principles on the other hand. As I have shown, this ambiguity is already present in *The Struggle for Recognition*, but it becomes more pronounced in Honneth's subsequent work. I will focus next on tracing the role and effect of these tensions in two books: the already mentioned *Redistribution or Recognition?* co-authored with Nancy Fraser and *Reification* from 2008. Many other aspects of Honneth's work after *The Struggle for Recognition* will thereby not be discussed in detail, but since the tensions in question concern the very core of Honneth's overall project, they deserve a closer look.

5.3.1 The principles of recognition

An important new feature in Honneth's thought in the book he co-authored with Nancy Fraser *Redistribution or Recognition?*[58] is a relative de-emphasis of the psychological aspects of recognition prominent in *The Struggle for Recognition* and an increased emphasis on "principles of recognition" as central to what gives society legitimacy in the eyes of its members and against which they thus judge its actual state and functioning at any given time. As Honneth explains in his debate with Fraser, in the bourgeois-capitalist social order the nuclear family is guided by the "recognition principle of love",[59] legal relations by the "principle of legal equality",[60] and the sphere of work by the already mentioned "achievement principle".[61] Under the influence of Fraser's scepticism about universal claims about the human good, Honneth now quite forcefully emphasizes that these principles are creations of European modernity and thus not universally human. Yet, here and there in the book, he nevertheless talks in a different, universal-anthropological register, describing the need for

recognition as a "quasi-transcendental interest of the human race" or the "form" of expectations for recognition as "an anthropological constant" underlying their historically changing "contents"[62] and saying that struggles for recognition point at "unmet demands of humanity at large".[63]

Honneth's thinking seems to be drawn in two opposite directions here: one historicist, emphasizing that the recognition principles on which the legitimacy of the bourgeois-capitalist society rests are specific to that society, and the other universalist, suggesting that the need for recognition is universally human and as to its "form" independent of time, place, and cultural context.[64] The problem with the first line of thought is that if the recognition principles really are specific to European modernity or the capitalist-bourgeois social order, and if social critique has to appeal to these and no other principles in order to be immanent, this runs contrary to Honneth's claim that the normative standards of his "formal concept of good life" can be "normatively extracted from the plurality of all particular forms of life".[65] He is then in fact talking about not standards that apply everywhere but about standards internal to a particular form of society. And then the problem becomes how to justify the validity of those standards. Honneth tries to address this problem in *Redistribution or Recognition?* with a conception of "moral progress".[66] He suggests that the modern liberal capitalist form of society represents moral progress compared with forms that preceded it since it brings about "an increase of social possibilities for individualization as well as a rise in social inclusion".[67] This is to say, one the one hand, that "new parts of personality are opened up to mutual recognition" and, on the other hand, that "more persons are included into existing recognition relations".[68]

Honneth also proposes another criterion for measuring moral progress. This is the "normative surplus" of the recognition principles, which is to say the difference between their promise and realization: each of the three principles of love, legal equality, and achievement can be appealed to in an indefinite number of specifications and cases, and arguments can be made that the given circumstances do not adequately or appropriately realize one or more of them. There would be much to say about the details of these two ideas, how exactly they relate to each other, and what they could mean in detail, but the general problem with them is that neither one actually solves Honneth's hesitation between historicism and universalism. That is, if one assumes that the principles of "individualization" and "social inclusion" are valid only in the liberal capitalist social order, the implication one is committed to is that they can justify neither that order nor themselves. If one does want them to do the justifying work and hence function as criteria for progress, this requires biting the bullet and accepting that their validity is not limited to that order.

As for the idea of surplus validity, it arguably does not fare much better as it merely articulates something intrinsic to the relationship of any norms or criteria to reality: social reality may not adequately live up to or realize the given norms or principles and hence it can be criticized by reference to

them. But whether this or that norm is justified or good, and thus whether its increasing realization in social reality represents progress, is a different question. Even to say that what is at stake are not these or those contingent norms but norms constitutive of a social order or its reproduction does not help since it is still a different question whether this social order is better than that one. Without introducing some principle or criterion that applies across different historical norm systems and societies, one has in fact not introduced criteria for comparing them and thus for distinguishing progress from regress in history.

Let me take up another problem, one to do with the differences between the different forms of recognition. Whereas Honneth's universalist talk of recognition and the need for it as an "anthropological constant" seems to refer to recognition in the purely intersubjective sense, the historically changing "principles of recognition" refer to institutionalized principles or norms. As Honneth does not make this distinction between the intersubjective and the institutional explicit, the tension between them, rather than being reconciled, remains an unarticulated internal problem in his model. The problem, in a nutshell, is that purely intersubjective recognition *cannot*, strictly speaking, be governed by norms or principles; or, to be exact, the 'unconditional', 'genuinely personifying', or (in Hegelian terms) 'fully spiritual' mode cannot be so governed. Yet it is arguably recognition in the purely intersubjective sense, and in this particular mode, that the universalist ambitions of Honneth's model must rely on, if on anything. Let me explain why.

According to the "principles of recognition", as Honneth articulates them, in families and close personal relations persons ought to be cared for, in the legal realm they ought to enjoy equality, and in the realm of production and work they ought to be esteemed according to their contributions. To the extent that these spheres really live up to their "principles" or "norms of recognition", individuals experience that the society satisfies their fundamental recognition needs which makes it legitimate in their view. As to the axiological sphere, the problem, however, is that though there can be institutionalized norms, principles, or laws prescribing that parents ought to *take care of* their children, a law prescribing that they should *love* them makes little sense since the attitude of love is not something that can be prescribed. The same goes for the contributive dimension: though there can be institutionalized norms or principles prescribing fair ways in which contributions are to be evaluated and thus *remunerated* and though there can even be institutionalized procedures on how to challenge the given evaluations, the attitude of genuine *gratitude* cannot be prescribed, nor can motivations to work that make someone worthy of gratitude.

One might think that this impossibility stems from the irreducibility of the axiological and contributive dimensions of recognition to the deontological dimension to do with norms, but actually it stems from the irreducibility of the unconditional or fully personifying mode of purely intersubjective recognition on *any* of the three dimensions to something

that can be prescribed by norms or principles (whether institutional, social, or intersubjective). Hence, it applies also in the deontological dimension. Though laws attributing rights to individuals or groups demand that they respect* each other as bearers of right—or, in other words, act in ways that do not violate these rights—laws cannot demand that individuals or groups have *attitudes* of genuine respect towards each other (the having of which means that one is motivationally 'affected' by the other as having authority on one in the unmediated way explained in 3.2 and 3.4.5). Just as loving or feeling grateful *because* there is a norm according to which one ought to is not genuine love or gratitude, taking others as having authority because of a norm which says that one ought to is not genuine respect.

Note that the same does not apply to the conditional mode of purely intersubjective recognition as it is something that can partly be governed by norms. Being required by social norms, or by law, to take care of someone, say one's children (action), means that one will be concerned for them (attitude) since one's failure to take care of them might lead to punishment and is hence against one's self-interest. Concern for the other is, in this case, conditional on one's self-concern. Similarly, being required by norms or the law to obey someone or some people (action) means that one takes them as having authority on one (attitude) out of self-concern. Finally, norms of appropriate remuneration for contributions can provide prudential reasons for evaluating the given contributions according to the norms (even if it might be less clear what exactly the implication with regard to attitudes is here).

On each of the three dimensions, what matters most for psychological development and well-being—namely *unconditional intersubjective attitudes of intersubjective recognition*—simply does not mix well with the idea of "principles", "norms", and "orders" of recognition. But I still haven't fully explained *why* exactly one should think that it is the purely intersubjective attitudes of recognition in the unconditional mode in which the universalist credentials of Honneth's model are, or must be, invested and thus why one should think that by compromising the role of these attitudes in his theory Honneth also compromises those credentials. Let me explain further.

Though Honneth puts considerably less emphasis on psychology in his debate with Fraser than he did in *The Struggle for recognition*, in formulating the anthropological or universalist side of his argument he does still give psychology a crucial role. He speaks of "the structure of human interests", which he takes to be intimately connected to "the structure of social reality" and which for him provides normative criteria for critiquing "all given forms of social organization"[69]—apparently both modern and pre-modern. Honneth writes:

> Essentially, my idea amounts to the hypothesis that all social integration depends on reliable forms of mutual recognition, whose insufficiencies or deficits are always tied to feelings of misrecognition—which, in turn, can be regarded as the engine of social change.[70]

It is feelings of misrecognition or of "humiliation and disrespect"[71] caused by experienced lack of appropriate or adequate recognition which have a tendency to lead (in bad cases) to disintegration of societies, or (in good cases) to emancipatory movements and thereby progress towards a better society. Importantly, Honneth also repeats in his exchange with Fraser the claim that the expectations for and experiences of recognition which he states all social integration depends on are "moral" expectations and experiences.[72] One needs to ask what must recognition be if the expectations and experiences concerning it or its absence are *moral* expectations and experiences? And further—since Honneth seems to be still committed in *Redistribution or Recognition?* to what he said of the psychological importance of recognition in *The Struggle for Recognition*—what must recognition be if it is to have such importance?

As I have argued, norm-mediated recognition or, in other words, recognition or respect* for someone as a bearer of institutionalized or informal rights (in this case, prescribed by the "recognition principles") does not have nearly as clear a connection to the recognizee's self-conception as purely intersubjective recognition does—or, more precisely, as its unconditional or genuinely personifying mode does. The same goes for the state's vertical recognition of individuals in the sense of granting them rights: its connection to the rights-bearers' self-conception is all but straightforward. And, certainly, the *moral* character of both vertical recognition of individuals by the state and horizontal respect* between individuals as rights-bearers is all but clear since rights can be claimed, granted, and respected* for various reasons, many of which are not in any obvious way moral in nature.[73] Finally, the constraint that expectations of recognition are moral expectations clearly also rules out the adequacy of intersubjective recognition in the conditional mode—as merely instrumental concern for the well-being of others, merely conditional attribution of authority, or merely instrumental valuing are not moral forms of regard.

All in all, given that Honneth still thinks of recognition in the relevant sense as having a decisive influence on the psychology of its recipients, and given that he still thinks of expectations and experiences of recognition or lack thereof as moral expectations and experiences, it seems that the attitudes of love, respect, and gratitude are what he should be talking about. How exactly these are related to institutionalized principles or norms is then an issue that requires further clarification. Given that such attitudes cannot, strictly speaking, be prescribed by norms, one question here is whether there are other ways in which norms can influence them and, if so, what exactly they are. This is a question I took up in 4.2.3 with regard to Fraser's model, but a more thorough investigation would be required to determine whether or how the idea of historically and culturally varying "norms of recognition" and of "recognition orders" can be reconciled with the idea of recognition in the purely intersubjective and unconditional sense.[74]

Another question, and another direction to develop this complex of issues, is to ask what are the conditions on which institutionalized norms or principles can be, and can be experienced as, expressions or embodiments of unconditional intersubjective recognition between their co-authorities, which in democracies means the members of the society. The task here is to focus more closely on the different possible motives behind the social and political processes that lead to, or support, particular institutionalized principles or norms. Such processes can clearly involve *both* purely strategic competition between egoistically motivated parties (often involving ideological masking of particular interests as the common interest) *and* moral or ethical motives in the form of unconditional or genuinely personifying recognition between members of the society.

At the end of Chapter 3.5, I pointed out that Hegel's conceptual framework allows, in principle, for thinking of a range or moral or ethical motives behind rights relations. From this point of view, though other societies may have different sets of institutions or institutionalized principles than the capitalist-bourgeois ones, what is decisive for the moral or ethical quality of any society, and thus for its capacity to support the positive self-relations of its members, is the extent to which the principles are, and thus can be meaningfully experienced or imagined without self-deception as, expressions of genuine unconditional intersubjective recognition between the members.

Crucially, here we have a standpoint of critique which is not dependent on any particular framework of institutionalized principles and hence a standpoint from which one can critically evaluate, as Honneth puts it, "all given forms of social organization".[75] To the extent that unconditional or fully personifying intersubjective recognition is a moral expectation that is shared across cultures and epochs—grounded in "the structure of human interest"—this is moreover an *immanent* standpoint of critique which appeals not to criteria posited by the philosopher, but to universal needs and "demands of humanity at large".[76] This standpoint, admittedly still weak but preliminarily reached by means of an immanently critical reading of Honneth as well as of the four other authors in the previous chapters, is something that I will try to substantiate in the final chapter.

5.3.2 *Deepening divide between the layers*

Honneth's oeuvre since the publication of his debate with Fraser in 2003 is extensive and I will limit myself next to general observations about the role that the just-discussed unresolved tension plays in his short but important study *Reification*,[77] before turning to his more recent large work *Freedom's Right*.[78]

In *Reification*, Honneth aims at rehabilitating the idea of "reification" famous from Georg Lucàcs and others in the Marxist tradition. He elaborates on Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's idea that reification of other persons is a form of "forgetting", suggesting that it is, more exactly, forgetting of an "elementary" form of recognition of the other person.

What is at stake is an emotional attunement to the other, which in early infancy opens the infant's perspective to the perspective of its mother or caretaker or makes it possible for the infant to place herself "in the perspective of another" and thereby enter a world of shared meanings.[79] It is from the perspective of concrete others that the child learns to grasp "the abundance of existential significance that situational circumstances can have for people", thus becoming aware of "a world of meaningful qualities" in which one must involve oneself practically.[80] In other words, the helpless infant must learn the practical meanings of things, qualities, events, and circumstances from the perspective of the adult, and the elementary form of recognizing the adult, an emotional attunement to her, is whereby the infant enters that perspective.

Honneth's idea is now that a "forgetting" or repression of this original emotional attunement is at the heart of relating to others in emotionally cold, purely "observing", or "reifying" ways in which they appear as mere objects or things rather than as subjects or persons. There are many interesting details in this proposal, but the main issue with regard to the concept of recognition is the thought that this "elementary" or "existential" form of recognition provides "the foundation for all other, more substantial forms of recognition".[81] By the latter, Honneth apparently means the three forms of recognition of love, respect, and esteem familiar from *The Struggle for Recognition*. Importantly, this formulation evokes the expectation that he now thinks of these three forms of recognition as different ways in which a subject sees the world from the practical perspective of the other subject and thus sees things, qualities, events, and circumstances from the point of view of the practical significances that they have for her. The more "elementary" form of recognition of "emotional attunement"—so Honneth would seem to be suggesting—is merely something that makes these possible.[82]

This is a highly interesting way to think of the three dimensions of intersubjective recognition, one that makes good sense of at least love and respect: as I suggested in analyzing Hegel's text (in 3.4.5 and 3.5), love as recognition involves or is seeing the world from the perspective of the other's concerns and thus of what for her is good or bad, and respect as recognition involves or is seeing the world from the point of view of what the other judges as right or wrong. I called these *axiological* and *deontological decentering* or *triangulation* respectively. However, as we have seen, this is not how Honneth actually describes these forms of recognition in his previous work, or at least not consistently so. More strikingly, neither is it how he even describes them in *Reification*. In *Reification*, Honneth again talks of the more "substantial" forms of recognition by using the language of principles or "internalized norms of recognition". According to *Reification*, these "culturally specific norms of recognition" "regulate how subjects deal with each other legitimately in various social relations" and what "duties" they have towards each other.[83]

Described in this way, the three more substantial forms of recognition are thus not in fact purely intersubjective phenomena but rather

something regulated by the institutionalized (or at least social) norms of a "recognition order". As seeing the world from the perspective of the other is a matter of attitudes and other psychological phenomena and as these cannot, strictly speaking, be prescribed by norms, there is a gulf between, on the one hand, Honneth's suggestion that the three forms of recognition are ways of adopting the practical perspective of the other and, on the other hand, his actual description of them in terms of "norms of recognition". Since Honneth has not clearly articulated the distinction and thus the relation between recognition in the intersubjective and in the institutionally mediated senses, his formulations remain again ambivalent with regard the two.

As for the tension between the universal-anthropological and the historicist perspectives to recognition, one may conjecture that at least part of Honneth's motivation to introduce the "more elementary" form of recognition in *Reification* is the wish to respond to the threat of historical relativism. It is now the elementary form to which Honneth invests the universalist ambitions of his project: though the three "more substantial" forms of recognition, or the principles regulating them, are specific to the modern capitalist-bourgeois societies, the "more elementary" form and its importance are something universally human. But as we have seen, despite Honneth's suggestion that the latter is the "foundation" of the former, it remains unclear how exactly this could be the case and thus how exactly the two are meant to be related. Because of this unclarity, Honneth's strategy in *Reification* does not seem successful in solving the tension between the universal-anthropological and the historicist motives of his project.[84] His reference to the idea of recognition as triangulation, though not extensively developed in *Reification*, remains nevertheless valuable.[85]

5.4 Freedom, recognition, and relativism

Honneth has not elaborated further on the project he outlines in *Reification*, and in his more recent large monograph *Freedom's Right* (published originally as *Das Recht der Freiheit* in 2011), recognition is replaced by *freedom* as the master concept—in ways heavily influenced by Hegel's idea of freedom as "being with oneself in the other". What is striking about this book is that in it Honneth seems to 'solve' the oscillation or ambivalence I have been pointing out by more or less giving up his universalist aspirations, apparently limiting the scope of the project in *Freedom's Right* to a reconstruction of normative principles that have been institutionalized in his own time and place, which is to say in the liberal-capitalist, Western European societies—and especially Western Germany—at the time of the writing of the book.[86] Honneth considers his project of reconstruction as Hegelian and, by doing so, follows a historicist or contextualist reading of Hegel usual in contemporary Frankfurt School theorizing. This is a reading which tends to de-emphasize the explicitly universalist aspects of Hegel's social thought that I discussed in Chapter 3.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on what happens to the concept of recognition in Honneth's *Freedom's Right* and how this relates to the question of universalism. I will argue that despite the official historicism of his approach, there are unarticulated aspects in the book that point to universalism, and by articulating these I will continue an immanently critical "deduction" (to speak Fichtean or Hegelese) of the standpoint that I will spell out in the final chapter.[87] I will also argue that the idea of immanent social critique that constricts itself to appealing to already institutionalized norms, principles, or ideals in a particular historical and cultural context is ultimately untenable, as is shown by Honneth's own slipping away from applying it in the book. This, in my view, is indeed an idea that should be abandoned, not only because of severe difficulties in applying it consistently but also because trying to apply it risks making the theory irrelevant for the largest part of humanity. Though *Freedom's Right* is in many ways a highly original and rewarding book, investigating this aspect of it will point to the need for critical social thought to go beyond the standpoint adopted in it, to go consciously global, anthropological, or "personhood-theoretical".

As we saw, in *Reification*, Honneth introduces what he considers a new form of recognition but without clarifying how exactly it relates to the forms of recognition that he distinguished in *The Struggle for Recognition*. In *Freedom's Right*, his perspective on recognition changes again without an explicit discussion of how exactly what he means by it in the book relates to what he meant by it in his earlier works. Honneth now connects "mutual recognition" more explicitly and more broadly than before with Hegel's idea of freedom as "being with oneself in the other".[88] He explains that for Hegel "in the first instance" mutual recognition "merely refers to the reciprocal experience of seeing ourselves confirmed in the desires and aims of the other, because the other's existence represents a condition for fulfilling our own desires and aims".[89] What Honneth in this passage means by 'freedom' is more exactly what he calls "social freedom".[90] It contrasts, first, with Hobbesian "negative freedom" as the "mere absence of external obstructions"[91] to realize one's contingent desires. Second, it contrasts with "reflexive freedom" as the capacity to reflect on and free oneself from the contingency of one's natural desires and act on motives that are genuinely one's own—whether this is by becoming "autonomous" in the Kantian sense through rational reflection and self-restriction or by becoming "authentic" in the romantic Herderian sense through a process of discovering "one's own, authentic desires".[92]

Honneth argues that each form of freedom, in order to be truly realized, requires an embodiment in institutions or at least in "weakly institutionalized practices and customs".[93] He explains:

> The first, negative conception of freedom assumes that a legally protected sphere in which subjects can act on their own unreflected preferences is a crucial part of individual freedom; by contrast, the second,

reflexive idea claims that freedom depends on the performance of intellectual acts, which are nevertheless regarded as normal acts performed by every competent subject. Only the third, social idea of freedom takes account of additional social conditions, linking the realization of freedom to the condition that other, accommodating subjects confirm my own aims.[94]

In short, the legal sphere institutionalizes individuals' negative freedom to act as they wish, following their contingent motivations without the need to justify themselves in moral terms, and abstracting themselves from social or ethical ties or commitments, within the limits allowed by the same freedom of others. Interestingly, Honneth links what he describes as the Herderian version of reflexive freedom—that of searching for and discovering one's own authentic way of being—to the legal sphere where individuals have a space for self-experimentation restricted neither by moral considerations nor by social ties or commitments.[95] He conceives of it as a "legally protected space for self-examination".[96] This can be seen as an existentialist or romantic filling-in of the Fichtean image of "mutually exclusive spheres" of freedom: there is something existentially important happening in those spheres.

The sphere of morality is then where individuals are able to reflect on their and each other's individual motivations and actions, as well as on their social ties and commitments, from a moral point of view and thus to realize "reflective" freedom in the Kantian sense. In comparison with the formally institutionalized legal sphere, this sphere is a matter of an only "weakly institutionalized cultural pattern"[97] or "weakly institutionalized practices and customs"[98] in which individuals allow each other, expect from each other, and participate in moral reflection and deliberation. Finally, social freedom is realized in institutions or practices and customs in which individuals are explicitly conscious of "being with oneself in the other" by consciously acting in mutually complementary roles. Here Honneth analyzes various forms of what I called objective reconciliation of ends at the end of Chapter 3.

5.4.1 Recognition and the legal sphere

Though freedom rather than recognition is the master concept in *Freedom's Right*, recognition—in various senses of the word—is involved in each of the three spheres and important for the realization of each of the three forms of freedom. As Honneth puts it, in the legal sphere, individuals "recognize each other reciprocally […] as persons who are entitled to decide for themselves which purposes they choose to pursue within the law", abstracting from any "examination of [each other's] ethical or personal motives".[99] In other words, individuals recognize each other as legal persons[100]—something we became acquainted with in examining Fichte and something that Hegel refers to as "abstract personhood" in the 'Abstract right' section of his

Philosophy of Right.[101] Importantly, Honneth emphasizes that this is not so much an affirmation of something about the recognizee but centrally involves the negative or abstractive moment just mentioned, a kind of 'hands off' policy reminiscent of Fichte's metaphor of mutually exclusive spheres. Honneth puts a strong emphasis on the fact that this policy concerns not merely actions that others are prohibited from interfering with within the agent's respective sphere, but importantly her inner life—her attitudes, motivations, and so on. On Honneth's account, as already stated, legal personhood thereby provides a "legally protected sphere for self-examination"[102] within which modern individuals can feel free to reflect on and experiment with styles and ends of life that seem existentially meaningful to them—a space to work on one's "identity", to use Taylor's language. This ethical function of legal freedom for modern individuals is also one of the reasons why the rights to property, as well as to freedom of religion, speech, and opinion[103]—all constitutive of the protected sphere—require supplementation by social rights to economic security and material well-being.[104] Without these, individuals are unlikely to have much time or energy for self-examination, self-exploration, or self-experimentation.

It is precisely the abstraction from one another's inner life which, while essential for the freedom of self-examination cherished by modern individuals, at the same time makes the legal sphere or legal aspect of interaction in a definite sense psychologically shallow. *As* legal persons, what I think or feel, or what my hopes or aspirations are, is not your business, and vice versa. From this point of view, we can thus agree with Honneth that there is an important respect in which the sphere of legal freedom is not one in which individuals genuinely, or in a psychologically deep sense, 'find themselves *in each other*', and hence we can agree with his taxonomy according to which legal freedom is not a genuinely "social" form of freedom.

Yet Honneth's own reason for not counting the legal sphere as a realm of social freedom is actually something else. He analytically distinguishes between two aspects of life in legal relations—being protected by rights and having authorship of rights—and focuses only on the first one in discussing what he calls "legal freedom". The second aspect, authorship of laws and thus legal rights, is something that he discusses separately as a form of social freedom realized by democratic will formation in the bourgeois public sphere and the modern constitutional state.[105] Unlike the first aspect, the second aspect, for Honneth, is properly a matter of social freedom since the way in which social freedom on his account instantiates the structure of being or finding oneself in the other is that individuals mutually find their own ends necessarily complemented by those of relevant others or realizable only if those of the others are also realized. This is to say that they want the respective ends of the others to be realized and find the others similarly wanting the same for their ends.[106] Whereas as occupants of legally protected private spheres individuals do not see themselves as connected in this way and hence do not see themselves 'in each other', as democratic citizens equipped with a particular kind of legal right, namely political rights to

participate in democratic will formation and ultimately authorization of laws, they do, in principle, see themselves in this way. Democratic will formation and decision-making are, after all, collective activities in which any individual's intentions require complementation by those of other participants in order to be realized.

While Honneth's discussions of both aspects of legal relations are highly insightful, the analytical distinction and Honneth's way of utilizing it tend to hide from view two issues crucial for understanding the role of recognition in the legal realm, issues that came up in the chapters on Fichte and Hegel. First, the particularity of the form that recognitive support of laws as institutionalized norms takes in modern democracies should not obfuscate universal social-ontological facts about the recognition dependency of institutionalized norms in general, nor should it create the impression that the claims that individuals have for exercising authority over those norms are solely a creation of the particular historical circumstances and institutional structures of modern democracies. Indeed, Honneth himself hints at a universal anthropological source of the claim for having authority over the norms one lives by in his discussion of moral freedom. Referring to Rainer Forst's Kant-inspired idea of a claim to "right to justification" fundamental to all interaction between human beings as rational beings,[107] he writes approvingly: "[a]s human beings, regardless of the nature of the legal order, we are all equally free to reject demands or social institutions that cannot be consented to by all those affected".[108] Following Forst (2011), Honneth is here pointing at something not specific to modern democracies but universally human: the claim for having authority on the norms (whether informal or institutionalized) that one is expected to live by.

Second, though political rights give individuals as citizens of democratic states an institutionalized authority status, or institutionalized deontic powers to participate in the authorizing and changing of laws and thereby rights, ultimately the authority on which the whole system rests is non- or pre-institutional, stemming from the participants' recognition in several senses of the term. Let me elaborate.

As Fichte makes clear, the realm of legal freedom—or juridical or institutional personhood—is, in fact, a thoroughly social matter since anyone can be free in this sense only on the condition that the relevant others cooperate in maintaining the system of mutually exclusive spheres constituted by rights (most fundamentally for Fichte, the right to property ownership). In terms of recognition, this involves (1) the members of the relevant community or group (paradigmatically citizens of a state) recognizing 'vertically upwards' the institutional whole (the state) that upholds the legal system, (2) that system (in a more metaphorical sense) recognizing 'vertically downwards' the citizens as bearers of rights or as juridical persons that is, and (3) the citizens recognizing each other horizontally in the institutionally mediated sense as such bearers. Furthermore, individuals will (whether consciously or habitually, whether concretely or in their imagination) (4) recognize each other in the purely intersubjective sense as authorities or

co-authorities of the institutional system or the various norms that it consists of. The degree of secularization is the degree of acknowledgement that no superhuman authority actually exists and thus the degree to which individuals will take themselves or each other (or both) as having authority not only on the observance of the norms but also on the norms themselves.[109]

Since the legal or institutional realm abstracts from motivations and certainly does not require 'moral' motivations, the last-mentioned form of recognition (4) can be in the conditional mode: I take others as having authority on the institutional whole to the extent that I cannot avoid it or that I take it to be in my interest. Similarly, (1) and (3) can, in principle, be based merely on prudential or selfish motives. All in all, though aspects of the above are in democracies institutionalized in terms of political rights and thus institutionalized deontic powers, at bottom any institutional system depends on something ontologically more fundamental: non- or pre-institutional relations of recognition. From the ontological point of view, modern democratic states are thus not exceptional but only a particular modification.

These facts about the ontological recognition dependence and thus, broadly speaking, 'sociality' of the legal sphere also show why it is actually not quite as different from the moral sphere as may first appear. The point is that in order for it to be relatively stable, an institutional system of legal rights needs to be embodied in habitual practices and dispositions, or form a culture of legality within which laws are mostly obeyed, and rights respected*, and in which violating laws is sanctioned not only by the state, but also by the attitudes, reprimands, and other informal sanctions by the citizens who mutually recognize each other (in the purely intersubjective sense) as having authority on the norms governing shared life.[110] In other words, legal norms or laws also need to become, to a sufficient degree, social norms. Or, to put it in Honneth's own terms, though formal institutionalization distinguishes the legal sphere from the moral, it too ultimately depends for its stability on "weakly institutionalized practices and customs".[111]

5.4.2 Recognition and the moral sphere

Let us now turn to Honneth's account of the moral sphere, or the sphere of "reflexive freedom", and a form of recognition in his view fundamental to it. This is what Honneth calls "moral respect". In short, in the moral sphere, individuals respect each other as "capable of controlling [their] intentions through higher-order acts of will and […] obeying universally acceptable principles".[112] Honneth does not explicitly distinguish between being able to subsume one's actions or intentions under such principles or norms on the one hand and being able to exercise authority on them on the other, but both seem to be included in the psychological capacities required for reflexive freedom and thus in what individuals expect from each other in the moral realm.

What is then the status that "moral respect" attributes to the recognizee? A first approximation could be 'authority' or 'co-authority' on the norms of interaction. Honneth conceives of the "universality" of the moral standpoint, or the "universal acceptability" of moral principles or norms, following Jürgen Habermas, in terms of what is often called the 'all-affected-principle'. "[M]oral principles"[113] or "universalizable reasons" can be reached only by taking up "the perspective of those who could be affected" by the actions at stake.[114] Honneth touches upon a well-known ambivalence in Habermas on what universalization would involve more concretely: whether it would require an actual consensus between all affected (on Habermas's account reached through a coercion-free discourse) or, since actual discourse between everyone affected is only rarely possible, whether some kind of hypothetical consensus would do.[115] Where actual consensus is possible or, in other words, where all those potentially affected can actually be consulted, they ought to be treated as "legislators" or co-legislators or, in other words, as authorities or co-authorities of the norms or principles of the actions affecting them that are at issue. *Moral* legislation is, however, not merely a matter of a compromise between self-interested parties but a process in which everyone, to really reflect on the given matter from a moral point of view, needs to try to abstract from their own prudential perspective and be "as fair and even-handed as possible".[116] Hence, so we may conjecture, to be an appropriately moral phenomenon, the mutual attribution of authority between the "legislators" cannot be conditional on self-interest. This suggests that "moral respect" is, or at least includes, the *unconditional* mode of taking others as having or sharing authority, or simply "respect" in my terminology.

Things get more complicated, however, when not all potentially affected can be consulted: here Honneth slips between a deontological and an axiological description. On the one hand, in such cases, we should avoid bias or partiality by imagining or "taking up a perspective that contains the presumed *judgment* of as many participants as possible".[117] And since the imagined others (the "participants" or those potentially affected) should be imagined as also trying to form their judgments from a universalizing moral perspective and thus abstracting from their self-interest, or at least not letting it unduly bias their judgment, this can be understood as imagining them with unconditional "moral respect". Here, however, a problem arises, one that Honneth does not discuss. If both I and those whose perspectives I am to take up are supposed to abstract from their respective particular interests, then it is not clear in what way, if any, the perspectives of the others that I should represent differ from mine, or from each other, and thus in what way we are dealing with a plurality of practical perspectives at all.

In the case of a real moral discourse between actual persons, one may sidestep this problem by saying that a plurality of perspectives is indeed involved in the very attempt to abstract from particular interests: all participants, or all 'moral co-legislators', can concretely contribute to the joint attempt of coming up with norms or principles that are "universally

acceptable" or "as fair and even-handed as possible". They are contribut-
ing to the collective effort of trying to eliminate undue partiality of
perspective.

But in the case of imagining or "taking up" the perspectives of those who
are not actually present or cannot be consulted, this answer is not available:
the only one actually 'contributing' is the one (or ones) doing the imagining,
and there is no-one correcting his or her (or their) partiality. In what way are
others or other perspectives then involved at all? Honneth does not thematize
this problem, but some of his formulations suggest a response: he often
describes involving those potentially affected who cannot be actually con-
sulted in terms of taking on board what one imagines to be their *interests*.[118]
It is only when we imagine the particularity of other people's interests—or, in
other words, what we assume to be good for them or supportive of their hap-
piness or well-being[119]—that we are imagining their perspectives as particular
practical perspectives at all. But note that this means switching from the
deontological register of respecting others as moral co-authorities to the axi-
ological register of concern for their interests, well-being, or happiness. And
since such concern, in order to be a *moral* concern, cannot be in the condi-
tional mode, we have thus switched from talking about unconditional attri-
bution or authority, or *respect*, to talking about unconditional concern for
well-being, or *love*. But why wouldn't it be enough that the one doing the
imagining merely *considers* the particular interests of the others without *car-
ing about* them? The reason is that on this line of thought there is no appro-
priately moral motivation for engaging in the moral imagining in the first
place: the motivation cannot be something prudential, as that would not
count as *moral* imagining, and moral respect cannot do the work for the
reason just explained. This means that "taking up" the perspective of others
who cannot be consulted but who may be affected must involve *imagining*
them with unconditional concern, or *lovingly*.[120]

Whatever the implications for moral theory in particular,[121] what this
hence means with regard to the broader issue of the importance of recogni-
tion is that the unconditional attitudes of purely intersubjective recognition,
respect and love, are essential for what constitutes the moral perspective or
a moral stance towards others on Honneth's description in *Freedom's Right*:
respect towards those who can be consulted and love towards those who
cannot and hence must be imaginatively represented.[122] These conclusions
are not made explicit by Honneth himself, but once made explicit they
again stress the importance of unconditional purely intersubjective recogni-
tion for the phenomena that Honneth is describing.

In the final chapter, I will argue that this form of recognition is central for
the moral or ethical quality of all shared life with the human form.
'Morality', on this view, is not a distinct sphere but an aspect of all human
interaction. But, first, I will show that unconditional recognition is in fact
crucial for all the areas of life discussed by Honneth under the rubric "social
freedom". Whereas in the case of personal relations this merely adds details
and minor revisions to Honneth's account, in the case of market relations it

indicates a fundamental problem in his approach—one that the young Marx would have been able to point out.

5.4.3 Recognition and social freedom

Perhaps the most original aspect of *Freedom's Right* is Honneth's account of "social freedom". Whereas the "negative freedom" of the legal sphere as the "mere absence of external obstructions"[123] and "reflexive freedom" of morality as the capacity to reflect on social reality from a moral perspective in abstraction from particularity of perspectives are characterized by the absence of or abstraction from something, social freedom is in a certain sense a positive form of freedom. It does not involve an abstraction from social objectivity and its infinite complexity but is rather freedom in it or with regard to it. Honneth's thought is that individuals can be truly free in their social interactions only if their intentions are mutually compatible and furthermore that they can experience their interactions as free only if they experience each other as conditions for the realization of their own intentions: that I can realize my intentions depends on you realizing yours, and the other way around, and thus we both *will* the realization of one other's intentions and are aware of both of us willing this. It is hereby that we can be and find ourselves 'in each other'. As Honneth puts is, each of us sees oneself "confirmed in the desires and aims of the other, because the other's existence represents a condition for fulfilling [one's] own desires and aims".[124] This can be the case only if co-existence is organized in terms of roles that positively complement each other or in terms of what Honneth, following Talcott Parsons, calls "relational institutions".[125] Honneth sees three such relational institutions in modern Western societies: personal relations, the market economy, and democratic will formation.[126] As will turn out, whereas Honneth's account is highly insightful on the many forms of objective reconciliation of ends, it is not quite as insightful on the psychological details and thus the subjective side of what Hegel called "concrete freedom". In abstracting from the recognitive details, Honneth's concept of social freedom has, so to say, a lower resolution than Hegel's concept of concrete freedom and this is a difference with significant consequences.

As will be seen, whereas in the case of personal relations Honneth's focus on the objective reconciliation of ends and the subjective focus on attitudes can helpfully complement each other, in the case of market relations attention to the attitudinal side sheds critical light on the details Honneth's argument. Yet, it turns out that Honneth's general aim of "moralizing" the market can nevertheless be saved by focussing on the attitudinal details and by utilizing the conceptual toolbox we have at our disposal.

5.4.3.1 PERSONAL RELATIONS

More clearly than in *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth differentiates 'personal relations' in *Freedom's Right* into three types: friendships,

intimate relations, and family relationships. Let us begin with *friendships*.[127] Honneth addresses a potential objection that friendship cannot be an institution as it is not governed by already existing, generally agreed upon rules or norms but rests solely on the agreement of the persons involved. He argues against this objection by pointing out that in everyday life we distinguish between "'genuine' and 'false' friends, [or] between 'true' and 'inauthentic' friendships".[128] The suggestion is that this proves that friendships are governed by generally agreed upon norms which a genuine friend observes and a false friend violates.

Honneth's reasoning here raises two issues. First, it does not actually show that friendship is an institution. What he says rather suggests that it is in his terms a "weakly institutionalized" phenomenon, governed by generally-agreed-upon or accepted social rather than institutional norms. Second, it does not show why the distinction between genuine and false or true and inauthentic friends should be conceived of as a deontological matter of norms at all rather than as an axiological matter of values or ideals. Indeed, that the 'genuineness', 'falsity', 'truthfulness', 'authenticity', and so on of friends and friendships intuitively allow for degrees suggests that what Honneth is talking about is actually better construed in axiological terms—in terms of constitutive or *immanent ideals* rather than norms, strictly speaking. An immanent ideal is what Hegel calls the "essence" or "concept" of something, such as friendship in this case.[129]

In what way are friendships then embodiments of social freedom? What Honneth has in mind more particularly is something that, drawing on a wide range of literature, he considers a modern Western phenomenon: friendship relations without expectation of benefit and thus free of selfish calculation. Such relationships enable individuals to reveal their inner lives, their feelings, and attitudes to a trusted other without fear of exploitation or humiliation. And since such self-expression is not only tolerated but also expected and encouraged between friends—part of the immanent ideal of friendships—in a friendship one can experience the respective other actually willing that one do what one wants to do: unburden one's heart and find consolation in the understanding and emotional support by the other. It is in this sense that friends can 'find themselves in each other'.

Intimate relationships differ from friendships on Honneth's conception in that they include, in addition to what constitutes friendships,[130] "mutual desire for sexual intimacy".[131] The way in which this realizes social freedom is that in mutual desire both partners can experience the respective other willing the realization of one's desire for sexual fulfilment. What distinguishes intimate relations from "liaisons" or "affairs" is orientation towards the future, a commitment for the relationship to last and deepen and to form a "community of memory" or a shared history.[132]

Like modern friendships, intimate relationships of the kind Honneth is reconstructing as a historically established social form in Western modernity are clearly not an institution strictly speaking but rather a weakly institutionalized social phenomenon. In terms of the distinctions I made in 1.3,

we can think of both as particular historically and culturally specific types of *concrete interpersonal relationships*. As concrete interpersonal relationships, friendships and intimate relationships share some elements but not all of them, and what they do not share distinguishes them as different kinds of concrete interpersonal relationships. On this account, there is no definite list of necessary components or constituents of these (or any) concrete relationships, and their blurry contours are drawn by many factors, including the kinds of interactions expected, the kinds of attitudes and emotions between the participants expected, and norms—both social or institutional—and thus norm-governed role expectations. Each of these factors is also historically changing and allows for local variation. Given the actual blurriness and variability of the immanent ideals or "concepts" at stake, it is unsurprising that Honneth is somewhat at pains in trying to distinguish the more essential from the more accidental in his description of intimate relationships.

The *family* as a particular 20th- and 21st-century Western social form, as Honneth conceives of it, involves the central features of both modern friendships and intimate relations, yet it introduces the further element of sexual reproduction and thus a child or children. Honneth's description of the historical development of this phenomenon is complex and again somewhat tortuous in its attempt to tease the essential from the accidental and changing. His core claim is that unlike friendships and intimate relations that are essentially dyadic, the family is essentially "triadic" in structure, including "two loving adults" and a child or children.[133] Single-parent households and "patchwork" family arrangements resulting from divorces and remarriages (or the *de facto* equivalents of these) are a challenge to this conception,[134] but they do not necessarily compromise the basic idea that a family is a particular kind of combination of inter-adult relationships and adult–child relationships.

Another distinguishing feature of the family is that it is actually institutionalized in the strict sense of legal regulation. As to the relationship between the adult partners, marriage comes with legal rights and duties for the spouses, and increasingly "*de facto*" relationships are recognized by states as involving at least many of the same rights and duties and thus governed by at least many of the same laws. As to the relationships between parents and children, parenthood is a legal status defined by rights and duties and so is being someone's child. Even divorce (or separation of a *de facto* couple) does not do away with all the legal rights and duties between children and their parents.

On the other hand, Honneth puts much emphasis on the expectations of family members regarding mutual care as a distinctive feature of family relations. Family members expect lifelong "sympathy, affection and care" appropriate to their respective life stages.[135] Not only are parents expected to care for their children and support their growing into adulthood, children as they get older are expected to "take on household chores or help take care of their younger siblings, so that the parents can have more free

time for themselves". Furthermore, importantly, "at the first sign of illness or fragility in old age", the now-mature children usually take on at least some role in providing care for their parents.[136] Many of the details, such as this last-mentioned one, seem to describe very specific conditions, and sociologists are likely to have much to say about their variation even between Western European countries.

I suggest that we are best served by thinking of the object of Honneth's "normative reconstruction"[137] (a theme to which we will return) of the family as a particular historically and culturally specific general constellation of mutually intertwining concrete interpersonal relationships characterized by various features, such as the typical kinds of living arrangements, behavioural expectations, temporal and developmental span, expected attitudes and emotions, and institutional and informal norms and roles. Some of these features it shares with friendships and intimate relationships, whereas others are specific to the family. Again, the borders are blurry and there is much room for local variation, so that whereas the typical or 'normal' case may be two parents and a child or children, not all deviations immediately or necessarily need to count as not-a-family.

What then is the role of recognition, or the forms of recognition involved, in these different modifications of what Honneth calls personal relationships? As to friendships, Honneth emphasizes the non-instrumental nature of the motivations involved. Friends are expected to provide consolation, to "attend to each other's respective concerns and consult on difficult decisions",[138] and, crucially, do this without an expectation for reward. Just as in his earlier description of "love" in *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth is not too explicit on what exactly the essential attitudes of the participants in this kind of relationship are, but we are again clearly dealing with a concrete interpersonal relationship which, like all concrete interpersonal relationships, involves many kinds of attitudes and other psychological elements together with non-psychological ones. An important factor in what draws and keeps friends together is plausibly, as Honneth suggests, "mutual affection and attraction".[139] Though Honneth does not explain what he means by these exactly, we can consider them as attitudes that are conditional on the particular features of their respective objects. Friends like each other, or something about each other, and this is what "attracts" them to each other and creates some kind of "affection" between them. "Affection", however, may also mean concern, and since clearly the concern that friends on Honneth's description of friendships have for each other is not instrumental or conditional, it can only be non-instrumental or unconditional or, in other words, what I have called the recognitive attitude of love. Friends provide each other consolation, advice, and support out of love for each other in this sense. And, as we have seen, the appropriate non-instrumentalizing attitudinal response to love and loving care is gratitude, which hence must also be thought of as an expected recognitive attitude between friends, or as part of the immanent ideal of friendships.

As for intimate relationships, there is potential for terminological confusion due to the common undifferentiated use of 'love' which Honneth sometimes follows in discussing them, creating the impression that the presence of love distinguishes these relationships from friendships. From the point of view of attitudes, the distinctive factor of intimate relations, however, is clearly sexual desire. An important question arises regarding the complementarity of sexual desires which ideally makes it the case that both partners desire also the satisfaction of the respective other's desire, and can therefore find their own desire affirmed by the other and hence be free 'in the other'. The question is whether the concern for the other's satisfaction can be merely a concern for it as instrumental for one's own satisfaction. Such may, of course, often be actually the case, and it may even be mutually accepted as part of the 'rules of the game' between mutually consenting adults. But such mutually respectful agreement on what is eventually mutual instrumentalization (as in Kant's widely disparaged notion of marriage) does not do justice to the romantic intuitions of deep connection and happiness through the dissolving of bodily and psychological boundaries that Honneth's discussion describes and traces in Western literature. The content of these intuitions clearly also involves unconditional concern for the happiness and thus also for the sexual satisfaction of the romantic partner. As in friendships, in intimate relationships partners are expected to care about each other's happiness (at least also) non-instrumentally or unconditionally or, in other words, to love each other in the strict sense of the recognitive attitude of love. And, as in friendships, in these relationships the appropriate attitudinal response to such unconditional concern for one's happiness, now including also sexual happiness, is gratitude. Though Honneth's does not do so, one might argue that without the presence of mutual love or loving care, calling intimate relationships 'love relationships' is misleading.[140]

Independently of the factors that draw the unsharp boundaries between friendships and intimate relationships, when it comes to the question of how these phenomena realize the ideal of being or finding oneself in the other, attitudes of unconditional purely intersubjective recognition are clearly of crucial importance. I can genuinely find myself affirmed only in a friend or lover who cares about me independently of selfish calculation, whose response to the same regard of her by me is gratitude rather than instrumental valuing, and who genuinely respects me as having a say in the terms of the relationship. Whereas Honneth's conception of social freedom puts its main emphasis on the complementarity of roles, Hegel's concept of concrete freedom, as I argued in 3.4.4, also emphasizes the attitudinal details: without mutual attitudes of unconditional intersubjective recognition, friends or lovers will not be able to see themselves *fully* affirmed in each other and thus be *fully free* in their relationship. To the extent that this is plausible, it shows that there are aspects of the Hegelian concept that Honneth's normative reconstruction in *Freedom's Right* underappreciates, aspects which resonate with Honneth's own more attitude-centred approach

in *The Struggle for Recognition*. I will have more to say about the difference between Honneth's concept of social freedom and Hegel's concept of concrete freedom in discussing Honneth's account of the market.

Of the three sub-types of personal relations, the family may seem the most complex one in terms of its recognitive components. This complexity, however, is not too difficult to grasp in terms of the differentiations made so far, and once we do that, we will see that it shares most if not all of those components with friendships and intimate relations despite the structural differences between it and them. As I suggested in my discussion of *The Struggle for Recognition*, each of the three dimensions of purely intersubjective recognition is clearly relevant in the family—the family members ideally caring for each other's happiness or well-being (at least also) in the unconditional mode of love, taking each other as co-authorities on the terms or norms of co-existence (at least also) in the unconditional mode of respect (adults according to their actual capacities, and children initially according to their potential capacities), and appreciating each other's contributions to their well-being (at least also) in the unconditional mode of gratitude. Honneth's much richer account of the modern family in *Freedom's Right* gives ample illustration of this, describing both parents and children as expected to provide loving care for one another in the different stages of their lives and children being increasingly respected as having an independent say in family matters.[141]

In reality, family members may, of course, lack appropriate recognition for each other. This is a failure to be a good family member, and eventually, if it continues, it may lead to a failure of the family as a family. Again, though in a relaxed sense one might talk of constitutive norms of a family being violated in such cases, it is more accurate to talk of failures to live up to immanent ideals of the constellation of concrete relationships in question. But, similarly, someone clearly fails to be a good friend in the sense intended by Honneth to the degree that she lacks non-instrumental concern for the well-being or happiness of her friend, respect for him as a co-authority on the terms of the relationships, or gratitude for her friend's unselfish support or attempts to help her in need. The same goes for intimate relationships.

All in all, the differences between the three kinds of personal relationships are, so it seems, differences not in their recognitive components but rather in their other features. Furthermore, though this remains undeveloped in Honneth's own discussion, expectations for unconditional intersubjective recognition clearly form immanent ideals and thus evaluative criteria for each of them in largely similar ways. In Hegelian jargon, unconditional attitudes of recognition are hence part of the "concept" of each of them. What I am getting at here is that though Honneth is describing historically and culturally very specific types of concrete interpersonal relationships, the immanent ideals that make any token of them successful or disappointing, good or bad, contain elements that are not specific in this way. Indeed, in

the final chapter, I will argue that they—attitudes of unconditional intersubjective recognition—are part of an immanent ideal that is universally human.

5.4.3.2 MARKET RELATIONS

Honneth's normative reconstruction of the market economy, while highly illuminating and rich in historical detail, is arguably the most problematic part of *Freedom's Right*.[142] Again, inquiring into the internal problems of the account is nevertheless highly instructive. Honneth's discussion begins with a lengthy reconstruction of the tradition of "moral economism", including Hegel, Emile Durkheim, Karl Polanyi, and others.[143] After this, he presents his own account of market relations as moral or ethical relations in the sense of realizing social freedom. The discussion is divided into two parts, covering "the sphere of consumption"[144] and the labour market[145] respectively. Honneth is well aware of scepticism about considering either one of these in terms of ethical relations or motives. He admits that in its current form the economic system "in the developed countries of the West […] is […] not a sphere of social freedom" as it does not "enable subjects to view each other's freedom as the condition of their own freedom".[146] That the market economy *in its current form* does not realize social freedom is not, in principle, decisive for Honneth, as his method of "normative reconstruction" is meant to allow for a discrepancy between the actual state of an institution and its immanent norms that justify it for those who accept it as part of their life. Indeed, such discrepancy is exactly what immanent critique of the existing conditions taps into on Honneth's view. Again, it is arguable that what he is after is in fact better described in axiological terms of immanent ideals rather than in deontological terms of norms. Either way, Honneth's account is under significant stress to show that the current state of things actually reflects not something that is essential to the market economy but rather a deviation from it.

   In what follows, I will argue that Honneth's normative reconstruction of the market has a major flaw that, again, comes down to a lack of differentiation between the conditional and the unconditional mode of recognition. On the one hand, Honneth is committed to maintaining that the norms, ideals, or evaluative principles in question are moral or ethical principles and, on the other hand, that they are immanent to the market itself. Once one spells out what it would actually mean that they are moral or ethical principles, this dual commitment turns out to be unsustainable. Yet I will argue that the program of 'moralizing the market' can be salvaged in another way, by utilizing the concept of concrete interpersonal relations.

   Let us take a look at Honneth's account of *the sphere of consumption*. Contrary to what Honneth calls "a merely liberal understanding of the market"[147] according to which the market economy merely realizes the legal freedom of satisfaction of selfish aims and desires, he wants to argue that the market in general is a sphere of social freedom. In the particular

sphere of consumption, this means that consumers and producers can only realize their intentions together, each recognizing the realization of the intentions of the other as a necessary condition for the realization of one's own intentions. Or, as Honneth puts it, following his reconstruction of Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right*,

> the market for consumer goods represents an abstract medium of recognition that enables subjects to realize their individual freedom together through complementary activities. Consumers recognize producers as enabling them to satisfy their needs, just as producers recognize consumers as enabling them to earn a livelihood.[148]

This quotation is exemplary of a striking general feature of Honneth's description of relations between consumers and producers as realizing social freedom: since it does not distinguish between the unconditional and the conditional mode of (purely intersubjective) horizontal recognition, it is compatible with pure mutual instrumentalization. 'Recognition' (here and elsewhere) in his discussion of consumer–producer relations is neutral between a moral or ethical mode on the one hand and instrumental appreciation on the other hand. From the point of view of the young Marxian perspective that I discussed in connection to the third sphere of recognition in *The Struggle of Recognition*, this is a decisive flaw: it fails to draw the fundamental distinction between what Marx called alienated and unalienated conditions.[149]

Not only is Honneth's use of 'recognition' (*Anerkennung* in the German original) neutral and thus ambivalent between the conditional and the unconditional mode, in many decisive places it also shades into recognition in the merely epistemic sense of identification, knowing, or believing. Take the following formulation:

> [c]onsumers recognize producers as enabling them to satisfy their needs, just as producers recognize consumers as enabling them to earn a livelihood.

As it reads, this can be understood simply as the epistemic state of each identifying the respective other as a means of one's own satisfaction of needs. The same goes at least partly for his general characterization of recognition and its connection to freedom according to Hegel:

> In the first instance, therefore, 'mutual recognition' merely refers to the reciprocal experience of seeing ourselves confirmed in the desires and aims of the other, because the other's existence represents a condition for fulfilling our own desires and aims. Once both subjects recognize the need to supplement their respective aims, thus seeing their own aims in the other, merely reflexive freedom becomes intersubjective freedom.[150]

As Honneth uses it here, "mutual recognition" seems to be merely the epistemic state of perceiving the aims and desires of the other and those of one's own as complementary or as mutually instrumental. 'Recognition' in "[o]nce both subjects recognize" can be understood as a morally or ethically neutral acknowledgement of a state of affairs. That I need you in order to get what I want or need, that you need me for the same reason, that our needs are complementary, and that we both acknowledge all of this are, again, compatible with mere mutual egoism and instrumental calculation.

As for conceptions of freedom, one may wonder whether Honneth is actually presenting a real alternative to "the liberal understanding" according to which market economy merely realizes the legal freedom of satisfaction of individual aims and desires in the market. Consider the following summary by Honneth of "social freedom" in consumer–producer relations:

> consumers can only realize their freedom to satisfy their individual interests by offering companies an opportunity for profit maximization through consumer demand on the market. Conversely, companies can only maximize profits by actually producing the goods that consumers demand.[151]

It is difficult to see what exactly here challenges the liberal understanding. What Honneth is pointing out are necessary requirements for the realization of the negative freedom of the legal sphere in the market. Each can satisfy their individual interests only by cooperating and not merely in the abstract sense of mutually accepting and observing the system of laws that maintain the market but also in the concrete sense of acting as market actors, as consumers and producers, and as buyers and sellers. Whereas Fichte points out that property owners or legal persons are forced to "recognize" each other and the state as upholding the system of property rights, Honneth additionally points out that in the roles of consumers and producers they have to "recognize" each other's needs and aims as mutually instrumental. Though pointing out these necessities is not without significance as it emphasizes the cooperative nature of the market (a de-reifying emphasis, if you want), it is not obvious that this adds up to another, moral or ethical concept of freedom realized by the market.

From another perspective, if one does allow that Honneth's emphasis on the cooperative nature of the market is enough to count as conceiving it in terms of a distinctive "social" concept of freedom, then one must again conclude that this concept differs in a crucial respect from Hegel's concept of "concrete freedom". Whereas Honneth's concept can be understood simply in terms of conscious complementarity of functional roles, which is neutral with regard to the motivations and attitudes of the participants and thus morally or ethically neutral, Hegel's concept is more discerning. For individuals to be *fully* free in Hegel's "concrete" sense, which is to say for them to *fully* find themselves in each other, they have to have *unconditional*

attitudes of purely intersubjective recognition towards each other. What Honneth has certainly not shown, working with his more unspecific concept, is that *this* would be an immanent ideal in relationships between consumers and producers *as* market relationships. To suggest that it is would be, I take it, too obviously wrong to require a separate argument.

Though Honneth's reconstruction of market relations between consumers and producers *as ethical or moral relations* hence ultimately fails on the grounds just explained, it would be hasty and simplifying to dismiss the whole idea of moral or ethical considerations as having a role in those relations. What Honneth has merely failed to argue is that such considerations and motives—unconditional attitudes of recognition that is—are immanent to consumer–producer relations *as market relations*. Indeed, the history of practical attempts described by Honneth to 'moralize' the market, from bread riots, through consumer cooperatives, to latter-day consumer boycotts of environmentally irresponsible producers,[152] could be rationally reconstructed as involving a moral element *without* maintaining that this element is immanent to what is specific of relationships in the market *as market relations*. Utilizing again the concept of *concrete interpersonal relationship* that I introduced in Chapter 1.3, we can consider any such relationships between individuals or groups as involving a number of elements, some more essential and some more accidental to them.

Take an example: A purchases a house from builder B. A knows that, in his role as a market actor, B is solely concerned with maximizing his profit. Similarly, B expects A, in his role as a market actor, to be solely interested in getting the best house for the lowest possible price. Both are experienced and both accept the rules of the game, both accept them for prudential reasons, and for prudential reasons both also recognize the respective other as having equal authority on those rules. If B now slightly misleads A without breaking any laws or regulations, A may justifiably have moral resentment towards him, but there is no good reason to think that A resents B *in B's role as a market actor*. Rather, A's resentment is more aptly seen as resentment for B for letting the market aspect dominate the relationship to a reprehensible degree. At the same time, we can, and often do, *both* 'expect the worst' *and* expect much more than that of each other in market interactions; this is not a confusion but rather reflects the fact that the 'market relation' is in fact only a name for *one aspect* of the concrete interpersonal relationship in question. Even where the other aspects are mostly only imagined (as, say, in internet purchases where live interaction between the buyer and the seller [or producer] is more or less eliminated), we can *morally* reprehend devious operators, not, however, as market actors but *as human persons* more broadly, which is to say with regard to other aspects of our total relationship with them.

Or think of B in another scenario in which he does his best to run his business with good consumer satisfaction. He may indeed have moral motives for doing so, but these are not motives he has in his role *as* a market actor. In that role, he may well have *prudential* motives for maintaining a

good reputation, but the *moral* motives are not immanent to that role, which is to say to that aspect of his concrete interpersonal relationships with the consumers of his products or services. The latter belong to other aspects of his concrete being and concrete relationships, and intelligent consumers understand the difference. Honneth, in fact, sometimes comes close to such a line of thought in describing moral demands upon the market as demands for placing "constraints" on the market.[153] Put in my terms, this means placing constraints on the dominance of the merely instrumental motives defining of the market aspect of the concrete interpersonal relationship over motives and expectations proper to its other aspects.

What I am putting forth here is, if you want, a middle way between, on the one hand, Honneth's attempted but ultimately failed full-blown moralization of the market and, on the other hand, dividing social reality into two realms: the "system", including the market economy, construed as a realm free of norms and morality, and the "life-world" construed as the abode for both—or, in other words, the model of Jürgen Habermas on one reading.[154] Rather than dealing with a clash between two social realms, in recognition-theoretical terms we are dealing with a clash between different aspects of concrete interpersonal relationships and between their typical or defining respective motives and expectations. In their roles as market actors, persons can 'recognize' in the sense of identify or acknowledge the satisfaction of respective others' needs as instrumental for their own satisfaction and see or find themselves in each other's instrumental, non-moral recognition. Abstracting from, or in addition to, this aspect or component of their concrete interpersonal relationship, they may also have unconditional attitudes of purely intersubjective recognition towards each other and thus find themselves in each other in the deeper, genuinely personifying way enabled only by the unconditional attitudes. Lack of the relevant attitudes towards one by the other will be disappointing in both cases, but only in the latter case is this a matter of moral or ethical expectations being disappointed.

Importantly, these are expectations that are *not* due to immanent norms or ideals of the market but rather due to ideals immanent to human interaction more generally. Though, as Adam Smith famously put it, "[i]t is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest"[155]; the role of a butcher, brewer, or baker in a market economy never exhausts anyone's social existence. It also does not annul moral expectations that others may have of the person in question with regard to other aspects of their concrete interpersonal relationships with him—or simply as human persons.[156]

Much of the same critique applies to Honneth's account of the *labour market*.[157] The account is rich in historical detail on labour struggles and employee–employer relations—or on relations between 'labour' and 'capital'—in Western Europe from the 19th century to the current day. And, again, Honneth's aim is not merely descriptive but rather a "normative reconstruction" which is meant to reconstruct the moral or ethical promise

of social freedom inbuilt into these relations. It is hence—in principle—not a problem for Honneth's theory if the state of those relations currently, or in particular stages of the period that he covers, does not realize social freedom. The problem is rather, again, in showing that such states are deviations from a norm, ideal, or promise immanent to the labour market rather than "normal" to it. Both the liberal and the Marxist will be sceptical, and it is doubtful that Honneth has managed to win them over to his side.

In comparison with his discussion of the sphere of consumption, Honneth is somewhat less explicit on what social freedom means in the labour market, but on a plausible reconstruction it means again mutual conscious complementarity of aims. Both the worker and the capitalist can get what they are after only by cooperating and thus both see their own aims complemented and, in this sense, affirmed by those of the other. I care about you getting what you want to the extent that this is instrumental for me getting what I want, and you do the same. Since we are talking about labour and thus contributions, a further element in the picture is now the bourgeois "achievement principle"[158] familiar from *The Struggle for Recognition*, a principle to which the working classes according to Honneth's started appealing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the labour union movement. How exactly the achievement principle should be understood *as a moral or ethical principle* remains unclear just as it did in the earlier book, but Honneth laments that the unions were never able to arrive at a properly "normative self-understanding" but "essentially remained interest-organizations".[159] What he is getting at here is that, according to the self-understanding of the unions, they were engaged in strategic interest struggles rather than in moral or ethical struggles for recognition.

This raises a crucial question with regard to Honneth's methodological credo which he adopted in his debate with Nancy Fraser and which is at work in *Freedom's Right*: the idea that immanent critique can appeal only to already institutionalized norms or principles that are, as such, immanent to the existing institutional structures of a society. This is meant to preclude norms or principles being merely posited or declared from the outside. The question is this: why believe the philosopher Honneth according to whom the labour market as a way or organizing social cooperation harbours a moral or ethical promise immanent to it, instead of believing the union movement that sees its own struggles in the labour market predominantly as strategic interest struggles? Or, in other words, why believe that the norm, ideal, or promise immanent to the market is a moral or ethical promise of recognition, rather than a promise of material good or acceptable payment for labour invested? Whereas Honneth's view has a hard time to support the belief that the disappointing state of labour relations from the point of view of labour—both before and after the golden era of the labour movement right after the Second World War—is a deviation from a moral or ethical ideal, for the strategic view this state merely reflects long-term shifts in the respective bargaining power of labour and capital. Who gets to choose what actually is "immanent" here?

Should we believe the philosopher rather than the people who were engaged in the actual struggles and negotiations, organizing strikes and staring the capitalist in the eye?

In Chapter 5.2.3, I discussed what it would mean that the recognition or "esteem" for contributions would be a moral or ethical response and I argued that it means either gratitude for contributions or respect for authority on applications of the contribution principle or on the relative value of contributions. It is hardly plausible to suggest that the unconditional recognitive responses of gratitude or respect are an immanent ideal or promise of employee–employer relations *as market relations* any more than it is plausible to suggest that they are immanent to any other relationships as market relations. Yet, again, this does not mean that one should shun moral or ethical ideals or expectations as completely non-existent or as somehow fundamentally illusory in the labour market. It is perfectly coherent to think of these relationships as including both a purely strategic aspect—both parties using their respective and historically fluctuating bargaining position for maximizing their gain—and moral or ethical aspects. The former is immanent to the *market aspect* of these concrete relationships, and the latter to *other aspects* of the relationships as concrete relationships between human persons. This explains the simultaneous presence of both strategic and moral language in labour struggles and in the bargaining between employees and employers. It also allows for the phenomenon of moral language sometimes being used for strategic purposes: such use works only if moral expectations are not generally seen as totally foreign to these relationships. They aren't since these relationships are, after all, concrete relationships between real human persons.

There is one further component in Honneth's conception of market relationships as relationships realizing social freedom that I haven't so far mentioned, namely "discursive mechanisms"[160] for influencing the interests of the others and thereby giving "shape to the overall cooperative aims".[161] The relevant others here include both other workers and employers.[162] Worker–worker relations and worker–employer relations are of course in many respects quite different, and whereas unionization has a pacifying effect on the former by transforming them from a predominantly competitive relation into a relation in which a shared interest plays a major role (something Honneth puts much emphasis on), there seems no reason to think that it has the same effect on the latter. Rather, what unionisation does is to radically improve the bargaining position of the individual worker or group of workers against employers or "capital". These relationships are of course mediated by communication or "discursive mechanisms", perhaps most importantly negotiations on the wages and other labour conditions. Though this means that employees gain in say or authority in the terms of the employee–employer relationship, it is centrally a matter not of moral or unconditional respect but of conditional recognition of authority. It is exactly because of this conditionality that relative loss in bargaining power results in relative loss of authority, whether this is due to

globalization of capital movement, de-unionization, or any number of developments disadvantageous for workers under capitalism.

A striking feature of Honneth's account of the labour market is that globalization plays barely any role in it, as if a marginal or external phenomenon to the focus of his normative reconstruction: Western Europe and especially Western Germany. From a more global perspective, one cannot consider workers in other parts of the world whose bargaining power and thus material gain has improved, as those of workers in Western Europe or Germany has deteriorated, any less important. Yet, for the method of normative reconstruction as Honneth conceives of it, they—the hundreds of millions of people in the previously less "developed" parts of the world—are not visible.[163] This is an undesired but inevitable consequence of the method in *Freedom's Right* of focusing on principles thought of as immanent to particular historically and culturally specific institutional constellations, in this case those in Western Europe or Germany. My claim is that if critical social thought utilizing the concept of recognition is to be relevant for humanity at large (of which only a small minority shares the Western European experience), it needs to focus on principles or ideals that are common to humanity or immanent to the life-form of human persons in general.

5.4.3.3 RECOGNITION, SOCIAL FREEDOM, AND DEMOCRACY

The final section of *Freedom's Right* consists of a normative reconstruction of the democratic public sphere and constitutional state in Western Europe.[164] What is at issue is the history of institutional structures enabling collective will formation and thus authorization of the terms of shared life at the level of a nation-state. The focus is hence now on the deontological dimension of recognition and in a way that brings together the purely intersubjective and the institutional. The larger the social unit, the more demanding the process and structures required for co-authority and thus shared autonomy are. Institutions receive collective authorization through democratic processes and some of these institutions are required for making collective authorization and administration of shared life in the democratic state possible.

Honneth's account is insightful in, among other things, emphasizing the intertwinement of the three social or institutional spheres of personal relationships, economy, and democratic will formation, and the fact that without the first two being adequately democratic or just, the third one cannot be so either.[165] In brief, "democratic ethical life" ideally consists of three spheres of social freedom in the sense of systems of complementary roles of people who are co-authorities on the given forms of interaction. Yet only in the third sphere are collective deliberation, will formation, and co-authorization the main ends of the interaction. Also, though co-authority and thus mutual attribution of authority are important in all three spheres, only in this third sphere can the results be secured by means of legislation.[166]

Note that the fact that in a democratic state all adult citizens are in principle co-authorities with each other is one relevant fact concerning the market: both the market aspect and the democratic aspect are aspects of the concrete relationships between people interacting 'in the market'. Though in their roles as market actors individuals are expected to be motivated solely by the profit interest, this is never the only role anyone inhabits. As citizens of democratic states, the same individuals also expect other motivations and intersubjective attitudes from each other, attitudes that are moral or ethical in character. Though this is not something Honneth explicitly says, it is in harmony with his emphasis of the need for collective deliberation in a democratic state to be guided by a "moral compass" shared between citizens who are adequately united by bonds of "trust and solidarity". Drawing on Claus Offe, he points out that the "nation" has provided a "cultural interpretative schema"[167] or, as we could say, an imaginary, in which compatriots have been able to imagine each other in light of mutual attitudes that add up to trust and solidarity. This is what I meant (in 5.4.2 and elsewhere) by the idea of imagining others with unconditional attitudes of purely intersubjective recognition. A sufficient amount of unconditional intersubjective recognition between individuals and groups, as they imagine each other, is required for the trust that the respective others will not take advantage of us or ignore our will when they have the chance to do so. And without mutual trust, anything worth calling solidarity is hardly possible.

Although it contains a genuine wealth of insight, methodologically speaking the history of democratic institutions and culture in Western Europe is where Honneth's official commitment to an immanent normative reconstruction finally gives in. Though here and there Honneth explicitly claims that he is still reconstructing norms or principles that are in some nontrivial sense institutionalized in social reality rather than engaged in "outdoing reality by means of a merely moral concept",[168] it becomes increasingly unclear whether this really is the case. This is particularly conspicuous when Honneth extensively draws on the social theorists and thinkers Durkheim, Dewey, Arendt, and Habermas and their articulations of the various institutional and cultural requirements of a flourishing democracy.[169] Partly analogously to his discussion of the labour market where Honneth implicitly claimed to know better than the union movement what the immanent normative principles of the market really are, here he is drawing on thinkers who have articulated democratic principles in their writings when the social and institutional reality clearly has *not* instantiated those principles, at least not sufficiently.

One of many examples of this is Jürgen Habermas, whose writings on democratic publicity (according to Honneth) had in Western Germany in the 1960s and 1970s a "major impact on students' outrage at increasing processes of concentration in the newspaper industry and the creeping trivialization of journalism".[170] Another one is Hannah Arendt, whose "category of the 'public space' would become more influential in the 1980's when civil resistance against the communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe

began to take shape".[171] In both cases, Honneth is talking about ideals articulated by philosophers, principles which precisely were not institutionalized in the social reality in question but which through the articulation added to social pressure for institutional change. Habermas's and Arendt's writings certainly landed on fertile grounds in these historical junctures, giving articulation to principles, ideals, or demands that were gaining support among significant parts of the population—broadly in ways that Honneth's original recognition theory aimed to provide articulation to motivations that had fuelled and keep on fuelling various emancipatory movements. Importantly, however, this is not in keeping with the method of normative reconstruction of something that is *already institutionalized*.

Finally, on the very last pages, Honneth refers, with a somewhat nostalgic air, to historical struggles for emancipation—the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, and "struggles against demeaning labour conditions or female role obligations"—as events to which "the majority of the population throughout Western Europe looks back with the same feeling of […] enthusiastic approval".[172] Here Honneth is pointing to events in "collective memory" that could provide a "historical consciousness" capable of supporting a pan-European "culture of shared attentiveness and broadened solidarity"[173] in a situation in which both the economic and the democratic institutions in Europe are, according to him, ever further from realizing social freedom. Though Honneth claims that these are memories of struggles to realize "already institutionalized norms",[174] the content of his discussion seems to point to the exact opposite: they are precisely struggles for realizing norms, principles, or ideals that have *not* been institutionalized in social reality.

In the end, the idea which Honneth adopted in his debate with Nancy Fraser—already institutionalized principles as a necessary point of reference for normative or evaluative judgments concerning social reality—is revealed as inapplicable by his own attempt to implement it in *Freedom's Right*. Instead of exclusively appealing to norms that he claims to be institutionalized as role obligations and rights, he in fact is forced to appeal to a variety of ideals some of which appear to be institutionalized in this sense, some of which live as 'social' expectations widely shared by the population, and some of which are articulated only by philosophers. Yet, importantly, as Honneth clearly shows, even in the last-mentioned case the ideals are no less *real* in the causal sense of having a capacity to influence social reality. Once this has been acknowledged, the thought that norms, principles, or ideals that the critical theorist can appeal to *have to be* particular to the exact phenomenon and thus to the exact historical or cultural context under observation loses its rationale.

We are now free to talk more generally of human aspirations, aspirations that have a chance of motivating large sections of the population in a particular place at a particular time when they receive articulations that resonate with people's experiences. These articulations can be theological, philosophical, artistic, or what have you, and their origin does not have to

be in the historical time and place at stake and they definitely do not need to be already institutionalized in it. For them to inspire and move people and thereby affect the course of history, their being first institutionalized is not merely unnecessary; from an ontological point of view, this is also impossible given that institutional arrangements can come about in the first place only if they are by and large in agreement with the commitments or beliefs (however rational or irrational, well-informed, or ideologically misled) of the recognitive community on whose vertical upwards recognition they rest.

The methodological emancipation of critical social thought from attachment to already institutionalized (whether in the strong or weak sense) norms, principles, or ideals has a major consequence as for the audience that it can address: whereas *Freedom's Right*, owing to its self-imposed methodological constraints, can speak directly to the experiences of only a particular section of humanity, the methodological emancipation allows addressing humanity more broadly. To put this somewhat bluntly, it frees critical social thought from parochial Euro- (or Germano-)centrism.[175] The immediately arising objection of a starry-eyed "idealism" implied by the emancipation from the given that the realist or "materialist" critical theorist should avoid can be challenged by Honneth's own reference to the social and political influence of Habermas's and Arendt's work: theories do not live in a world beyond, but influence social reality by being adopted in collective self-understandings and interpretations of the world and what may be wrong about it. In Hegelian jargon, "absolute spirit", including philosophy (and art and religion), is every bit as real a part of spirit, or of the human life-form, as subjective and objective spirit are. To follow the Finnish social philosopher Arvi Särkelä,[176] social philosophy, correctly conceived, is itself part of social life and can have transformative influences on it. That it is not external to social life does mean that its task is not to invent ideals out of thin air. Normative reconstruction is still an essential part of its work; yet there is no good reason for that reconstruction to self-restrict itself to the particular details of the historical, cultural, and institutional circumstances where the thinker happens to find him- or herself. The critical transcendence of its grasp and thus its capacity to criticize particular circumstances stem exactly from its capacity to draw on wider resources. It is in this spirit that, in the remaining chapter, I will draw the outlines of a normative reconstruction that is unrestricted: its object is "spirit" or the human life-form in general.[177]

Notes

1 For a short overview of Honneth's reconstruction of Horkheimer, Adorno, Foucault and Habermas, see Honneth 1991, xiii–xxxii. For a thorough presentation of Honneth's thought and its development, see Deranty 2009. For more recent general presentations of Honneth, see Zurn 2015 and Wilhelm 2021. On the relationship of Honneth's thought to that of Habermas, see Iser 2008. On recognition as a central principle of critical theory in general, see

Schmidt Am Busch 2011. Renault 2019 develops an original approach in critical social thought, drawing on Honneth's theory of recognition.

2 Honneth 1995.
3 For his reading of the Jena Hegel, see ibid., Chapters 1–3. For his later reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, see Honneth 2010.
4 In writing this chapter, I was greatly benefited by discussions with Loughlin Gleeson.
5 For Honneth's own view of the distinction between critical *social* philosophy and *political* philosophy, see Honneth 2007b.
6 Honneth subscribes to Habermas's critique of the earlier Frankfurt school thinkers for their lack of critical reflection on the justification of their critical standards. (See Honneth 1991, xiii–xxxii.) The idea of immanent critique is clearly present already in the methodological Introduction of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel 2018, 49–59). In it, Hegel tries to clarify how it is possible to guide common sense or "the natural consciousness" to a philosophical grasp of reality by a method of argumentation that appeals only to common sense's own commitments without dictating truths or criteria against which it is to be measured from some epistemically privileged standpoint.
7 See Honneth 2002.
8 See also Deranty 2009, 431.
9 Honneth 1995, Chapter 7.
10 Ibid., 172.
11 See Kauppinen 2002 on the various ways in which something can be implicit as a normative or evaluative criterion in a culture or society and thus something that immanent social critique can appeal to.
12 See especially Zurn 2000.
13 On Honneth's 'fallibilist' methodology, see Deranty 2009, especially 277–286.
14 Honneth's terms for these three forms on recognition in his German original are *Liebe*, *Achtung*, and *Wertschäzung*. See Honneth 1992.
15 See the table in Honneth 1995, 129. This table is somewhat confusing in that it runs together *attitudes* and *social and institutional spheres* (see 1.3) without distinction under the title "Forms of recognition".
16 Ibid., 99–107.
17 Ibid., 105.
18 Idem.
19 Honneth draws here heavily on Donald Winnicott as well as Jessica Benjamin's (1988) psychoanalytic work on early interaction that explicitly utilizes a Hegelian model of desire and recognition.
20 Ibid., 105, 107, 174.
21 Ibid., 95.
22 Honneth 2007c.
23 Ibid., 178.
24 Ibid., 167.
25 For more on love as a form of recognition, see Ikäheimo 2012.
26 Ibid., 107–121.
27 Feinberg 1980, 151, according to Honneth 1995, 120.
28 The sexism of this formulation by Feinberg is, of course, unfortunate.
29 Honneth 1995, 115–118.
30 Marshall 1963, 87, according to Honneth 1995, 118.
31 Ibid., 71–91.
32 Ibid., 80–90.
33 Ibid., 78.
34 Ibid., 110.
35 Ibid., 112.

36 Needless to say, "Kantian" is here meant in a very loose sense that abstracts from the Kantian transcendental project.
37 In a more recent article, Honneth discusses a negative development in which "thanks to the successful struggle of cultural minorities for equal rights, the active, empowering meaning of civil rights has largely been worn down such that these are largely no longer read as a symbol of reciprocal respect but privatistically as instruments of securing personal performance" (Honneth 2012, 12). Honneth thus suggests that there was a time in which individuals "read" equal rights as a symbol of "reciprocal respect" for moral autonomy and argues that this interpretation has been worn down by some of the very same political struggles whereby equal rights have been extended to ever new groups of people. This supports my point that rights by no means *necessarily* imply respect for autonomy or authority on the norms of co-existence.
38 Rights and authority, of course, come together in the case of political rights since they are rights to exercise authority in political process. But even having political rights is no guarantee for intersubjective respect: people often complain about the political rights of others whom they do not think are rational enough to participate in political decision-making.
39 Honneth 1995, 121–130.
40 On recognition and work in the young Marx, see Chitty 2000, Brudney 2010, Quante 2011, Chitty 2018 and Ikäheimo 2018. See also Honneth's short discussion of Marx and recognition in *The Struggle for Recognition* (Honneth 1995), 146–152.
41 Ibid., 122–124
42 Ibid., 123.
43 Ibid., 121.
44 Fraser & Honneth 2003, 32.
45 See Quante 2009, Brudney 2010, and Ikäheimo 2018.
46 Since deeds done because one wants the recipient to feel grateful (which may be useful in various ways for the agent) do not deserve gratitude, they have to be executed under the guise of genuine non-instrumental concern for her. They are hence necessarily devious.
47 For two alternative views on the relation of recognition as esteem to the economic logic, see Ikäheimo & Laitinen 2010.
48 See Honneth's discussion of this in Fraser & Honneth 2003, 153–154.
49 It would be in two ways inappropriate to respond to 'egoistic' contributions with gratitude. First, egoistic deeds do not deserve gratitude; second, gratitude is not what their agent wants, assuming her aim is not to profit from misled gratitude. Correspondingly, it would be inappropriate to respond to 'altruistic' contributions with merely instrumental valuing, say, by commenting to others how useful they are without showing any gratitude or simply by offering remuneration. Such confusion of the moral logic of gift and gratitude with the economic logic is usually interpreted as insulting.
50 See Fraser & Honneth 2003, 147–159.
51 This explains how demands for adequate wages and decent working conditions by labour unions voiced in moral terms of "respect" can be taken literally even if the more cynical eye will always construe them simply in terms of strategic struggles and bargaining power.
52 Since gratitude is the expected response to contributions motivated (at least partly) out of unconditional concern for the good or well-being of others, the contributive and axiological dimensions are nevertheless very closely connected.
53 Honneth 1995, 148. The most relevant text by the early Marx in this respect are "Comments on James Mill" and "Estranged Labour", both in Marx and Engels 1975. For a detailed analysis of these texts, see Quante 2009. For my reading of the Hegel–Marx connection, see Ikäheimo 2018.
54 Idem.

55 Distinguishing these two elements—the prudential and the moral—in such expectations also helps one to understand better the peculiar difficulty with claims such as those for appropriate 'recognition' of the contribution that housewives have made to the society as work as well as claims for appropriate recognition of the contribution of professionals in the care or education sectors. As these groups are expected to contribute to the societal good at least partly out of non-instrumental concern for the immediate beneficiaries of their work, their demands for a better wage, or in the case of housewives for any remuneration at all, are easily met with moral reprimand for selfishness. Whenever *both* the economic logic of wage labour *and* the moral logic of gratitude apply to the same activity, demands for adequate recognition of these activities and responses to them tend to become ambivalent and confusing for the participants. It is the theoreticians' task to try to clarify the various issues at stake.

56 In Benedict Anderson's (1983) famous words, nations are largely "imagined communities".

57 I am writing this in Sydney, Australia at a time of skyrocketing property prices and plummeting building standards, both developments expected to lead into serious trouble in the near future.

58 Fraser and Honneth 2003.

59 Ibid., 146.

60 Ibid., 152.

61 Ibid., 147.

62 Ibid., 174.

63 Ibid., 244.

64 My thoughts on this ambivalence in Honneth have been informed by Loughlin Gleeson's work on the theme in his honours thesis at UNSW Sydney.

65 Honneth 1995, 172.

66 Fraser & Honneth 2003, 186.

67 Ibid., 185.

68 Ibid., 186.

69 Fraser & Honneth 2003, 244–245.

70 Idem.

71 Idem.

72 Ibid., 157, 170.

73 This is something that Honneth has subsequently acknowledged: "thanks to the successful struggle of cultural minorities for equal rights, the active, empowering meaning of civil rights has largely been worn down such that these are largely no longer read as a symbol of reciprocal respect but privatistically as instruments of securing personal performance" (Honneth 2012, 12). What this leaves open is what exactly are the conditions under which rights are (and thus on Honneth's account were in the past) experienced as a moral issue instead of merely an object of competing egoistic interests.

74 I present some thoughts about this topic in Ikäheimo 2015 and (forthcoming a).

75 Ibid., 244.

76 Idem.

77 Honneth 2008.

78 Honneth 2014.

79 Honneth 2008, 45.

80 Idem.

81 Ibid., 90, note 70.

82 See also the highly insightful discussion of the theme of reification in Honneth by Shaun Gallagher (2020, 196–207), which came to my attention too late to comment on here. As a scientifically informed phenomenologist, Gallagher is much less shy of universalism than contemporary critical theorists or political philosophers tend to be—a feature which makes his approach highly interesting from the point of view of what I am proposing in this book.

83 Idem., 153.
84 On this problem, see also Zurn 2015, 207–208.
85 I discuss *Reification* at more length in Ikäheimo 2021.
86 See especially his references to "Western Europe" on the last pages of the book (Honneth 2014, 334–335).
87 For critical discussion on *Freedom's Right*, see the special issue of *Critical Horizons* 16:2, 2015, including Honneth's reply to his critics.
88 Honneth 2014, 44.
89 Ibid., 44–45.
90 Following Neuhouser 2000.
91 Honneth 2014, 21.
92 Ibid., 34.
93 Ibid., 67.
94 Ibid., 65.
95 Ibid., 73.
96 Ibid., 75.
97 Ibid., 96.
98 Ibid., 67.
99 Ibid., 82.
100 Idem.
101 Hegel 1991, §§ 34–71.
102 Honneth 2014, 76.
103 Idem.
104 Ibid., 97.
105 Ibid., 253–335.
106 Ibid., 44–48.
107 See Forst 2011, Chapters 1 and 2.
108 Honneth 2014, 98.
109 Cornelius Castoriadis (1986) calls societies that are aware of the fact that they are the makers of their own laws "autonomous societies". The main difference between them and "heteronomous societies" is that the latter are not aware of the fact.
110 As a counterexample, think of the phenomenon of criminals or criminal families taking on a reality TV-star kind of status in commercial media. To the extent that this takes place, the informal "social" support for laws is eroded as informal attitudinal and discursive sanctions for violations of law are increasingly replaced by attitudes and expressions of fascination and admiration.
111 Honneth 2014, 67.
112 Ibid., 106.
113 Ibid., 93.
114 Ibid., 107.
115 Ibid., 103.
116 Ibid., 110.
117 Ibid., 110, my emphasis.
118 See, for example, Honneth 2014, p. 107: "the interests and intentions of all those who are affected by our actions"; p. 115: "considering the interests of those involved as impartially as possible"; p. 118: "take up a moral standpoint from which the interests of all potential victims can be generalized". The last citation is from Honneth's discussion of a pathological "moralism", but Honneth is not objecting to conceiving of the moral standpoint in terms of interests.
119 Here I am assuming that the only way to try to determine someone's interest without consulting her is by trying to determine what would be good for her

or—in the broadest possible sense—further her happiness or well-being. In other words, what is at issue are 'objective interests', not subjective interests or preferences.

120 I am admittedly ignoring one popular Kantian strategy, that of considering self-respect in some relevant sense as the appropriately moral motive. I will not argue it here separately, but in my view this egocentric strategy fundamentally misconstrues the whole phenomenon of morality for which appropriate responsiveness to the other or something about her is *the* crucial issue.

121 In Ikäheimo (forthcoming b), I develop the idea of unconditional intersubjective recognition as the core of a "fundamental ethics" of the life-form.

122 Though it is not considered in *Freedom's Right*'s broadly Kantian account of moral freedom, the idea of making sense of the 'moral standpoint' in terms of both (broadly Kantian) deontological and (broadly Aristotelian) axiological terms is an old theme in Honneth's work. See, for example, Honneth 2007d.

123 Honneth 2014, 21.

124 Ibid., 44–45.

125 Ibid., 125.

126 Ibid., 132 ff.

127 See Honneth 2014, 134–141.

128 Ibid., 134.

129 See Hegel 2010, 62: "Thus, for instance, we speak of a true friend and mean by that someone whose way of acting *conforms to the concept* of friendship. Similarly, we speak of a true work of art. Untrue then means as much as bad, something in itself inadequate. In this sense, a bad state is an untrue state, and what is bad and untrue generally consists in the *contradiction* that obtains *between* the determination or *the concept and* the concrete existence of *the object*" (emphasis modified).

130 See also Honneth 2014, 146–147.

131 Ibid., 147.

132 Honneth thinks, furthermore, that sexual intimacy and mutual desire for are accompanied in intimate relations with a concern and consideration for the other in his or her natural neediness and fragility more generally (ibid. 147 and 151). Such concern is also characteristic in his taxonomy of family relations—as well as of care work (ibid., 147)—and I will ignore it at this juncture.

133 Ibid., 154–155.

134 See ibid., 154, 161–162.

135 ibid., 164.

136 ibid., 165.

137 ibid., 6–10.

138 ibid., 138.

139 ibid., 136.

140 But then this justifies calling any relationship in which love is prominently present a 'love relationship', independently of whether or not sexual desire (in the everyday simple, non-Freudian sense) plays any role in it. For more on this, see Ikäheimo 2012.

141 See Honneth 2014, 158: "The parental fixation on 'orders' and 'obedience' has now largely been replaced by a focus on negotiation, which is supposed to better suit children's independent personalities and thus aid in developing their own free will".

142 For criticism, see the special issue of *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 16, no. 2 2015, which includes also Honneth's response to critics.

143 Ibid., 178–197.

144 Ibid., 198–222.
145 Ibid., 223–252.
146 Ibid., 176.
147 Ibid., 213.
148 Ibid., 200.
149 Timo Jütten presents a partly similar critique in an excellent article (Jütten 2015). I develop the Hegel–Marx connection with regard to freedom, recognition, alienation, and the "truly human" in Ikäheimo 2018.
150 Honneth 2014, 44–45.
151 Ibid., 208.
152 Ibid., 198–217.
153 See, for example, ibid., 210–211: "Nevertheless, the various, mostly uncoordinated movements of anti-consumerism, consumer protection, social welfare and consumer cooperatives combined to place some constraints on the progressive privatization of market-mediated consumption".
154 Interestingly, Honneth does not mention Habermas's alternative approach to the market in *Freedom's Right*. On Honneth's critique of the system–lifeworld distinction in Honneth's earlier work, see Deranty 2009, 88–98.
155 Smith 1976, 26–27.
156 This can be seen as a response to what Honneth calls "the Adam Smith problem" (Honneth 2014, 177) of how to reconcile (Smith's) economic thought with (his) moral philosophy. Whereas Honneth tries to introduce moral motives in market relationships as market relationships, my suggestion is to think of these as analytically distinct elements of the total relationship.
157 Ibid., 223–253.
158 Ibid., 231, 234, 241.
159 Ibid., 234.
160 Ibid., 193–198, 203, 205, 212, 217, 221, 229, 232, 238–240.
161 Ibid., 232.
162 Ibid.299.
163 This is not to romanticize the effects of the increasing globalization of capital movement but to emphasize, on the one hand, the crucial importance of the strategic aspect of employee–employer relationships—bargaining power—and, on the other hand, to stress the fact that Western Europeans or Germans are really only a small part of humanity. One could argue that the absence of the rest of humanity in the theory is a theoretical version of "social invisibility" as Honneth himself has insightfully analyzed it in Honneth 2001.
164 Ibid., 253–335.
165 Ibid., 330.
166 Ibid., 331.
167 Ibid., 332.
168 Ibid., 306.
169 Ibid., 266–286.
170 Ibid., 285.
171 Ibid., 283.
172 Ibid., 335.
173 Idem.
174 Ibid., 334.
175 See also Amy Allen's (2016) discussion of the problem of Eurocentrism in *Freedom's Right*. Allen's critical discussion turns around the figure of universal history as a single developmental path of all-things-considered progress along which civilizations can be ordered. This is one of the most obviously dead aspects of the Hegelian heritage in critical social thought. My account

only subscribes to the thought that progress or regress can be made and judged in particular issues and regards to particular social relations in particular societies—in the trivial sense of change for the better. This is in harmony with saying, for example, that hunter–gatherer societies are better than farming societies—or the other way around—in some particular issues, in some particular regards, with regard to some particular social relations, or that the bourgeois Western family model is in some respects better and in some respects worse than other family models. All-things-considered rankings can be nothing but aggregations of these issue-by-issue judgments and are, as such, extremely contestable and for most practical purposes useless.

176 Särkelä 2017 and 2018.

177 In *The Idea of Socialism—Towards a Renewal* (Honneth 2017), Honneth calls for a rehabilitation of the idea of socialism as well as socialist internationalism (pp. 102–113). As he puts it, this requires that "moral sensibilities […] converge enough to permit common action on the basis of shared diagnoses" (103). It requires formulating a vision that can form a Rawlsian "overlapping consensus" (ibid., 137, note 45) and lead to a "moral transnationalization" (104). Here Honneth is going in the universalist direction that I am recommending, yet aspects of his treatise of the idea of socialism still rely on the specificities of the institutional differentiation of Western modernity (see, for example, 106 on the "constitutive spheres of modern societies"). In the final chapter, I present an account that is not reliant on the institutional specificities of any particular society or form of society (whether modern, Western, or anything else), but is meant to be applicable to all of them. As Honneth puts it, the general idea of socialism is to make a society more "social" (102), and the final chapter can be read as an attempt to spell out of what making societies more social actually means when emancipated from any remainders of the fascination with the institutional details of Western in particular. What realizing the ideal in this or that society requires more precisely is then a matter of application to the historically developed social and institutional specificities of the given society.

References

Allen, Amy (2016): *The End of Progress—Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Anderson, Benedict (1983): *Imagined Communities—Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Benjamin, Jessica (1988): *The Bonds of Love—Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Brudney, Daniel (2010): Producing for Others. In: Hans-Christoph Schmidt Am Busch and Christopher Zurn (eds.) *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 151–188.

Castoriadis, Cornelius (1986): "First Institution of Society and Second Order Institutions". In: *Figures of the Thinkable*. Translated by David Ames Curtis, no publication date, essay published in French in 1986, 153–172. Available online: http://www.notbored.org/FTPK.pdf

Chitty, Andrew (2000): "Recognition and Social Relations of Production" In: Tony Burns and Ian Fraser (eds.): The Hegel-Marx Connection. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 167–197.

Chitty, Andrew (2018): "Human Solidarity in Hegel and Marx". In: Jan Kandiyali (ed.): *Reassessing Marx's Social and Political Philosophy: Freedom, Recognition and Human Flourishing*. New York and London: Routledge, 120–146.

Deranty, Jean-Philippe (2009): *Beyond Communication – A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill.

Feinberg, Joel (1980): "The nature and value of rights". In: *Rights, Justice, and the Bounds of Liberty: Essays in Social Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 245–257.

Forst, Rainer (2011): *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fraser, Nancy and Honneth, Axel (2003): *Redistribution or Recognition?—A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London: Verso.

Gallagher, Shaun (2020): *Action and Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hegel, G. W. F. (1991): *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. [PR]

Hegel, G.W.F. (2010): *The Science of Logic*. Translated and edited by George di Giovanni. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hegel, G.W.F. (2018 [1807]): *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Terry Pinkard. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Honneth, Axel (1991 [1988]): *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.

Honneth, Axel (1992): *Kampf um Anerkennung: zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Honneth, Axel (1995 [1992]): The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts. Translated by Joel Anderson. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Honneth, Axel (2001): "Invisibility: On the Epistemology of 'Recognition'". *Aristotelian Society Supplementary* 75 (1): 111–126.

Honneth, Axel (2002): "Grounding Recognition: A Rejoinder to Critical Questions". *Inquiry* 45 (4): 499–519.

Honneth, Axel (2007a): *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Honneth, Axel (2007b): "Pathologies of the Social: The Past and Present of Social Philosophy". In: Honneth, Axel 2007a, 3–48.

Honneth, Axel (2007c): "Love and Morality: On the Moral Content of Emotional Ties". In: Honneth, Axel 2007b, 163–180.

Honneth, Axel (2007d [2002]): "Between Aristotle and Kant". In: Honneth, Axel 2007b, 129–143.

Honneth, Axel (2008): *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Honneth, Axel (2010): *The Pathologies of Individual Freedom: Hegel's Social Theory*. Translated by Ladislaus Löb. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Honneth, Axel (2012): "Brutalization of the Social Conflict: Struggles for Recognition in the Early 21st Century". *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 13 (1): 5–19.

Honneth, Axel (2014 [2011]): Freedom's Right: *The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*. Translated by Joseph Ganalf. Cambridge: Polity.

Honneth, Axel (2017): *The Idea of Socialism. Towards a Renewal*. Translated by Joseph Ganahl. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Ikäheimo, Heikki (2012): "Globalizing Love – on the Nature and Scope of Love as a Form of Recognition". *Res Publica* 18 (Nr. 1, S): 11–24.

Ikäheimo, Heikki (2015): "Conceptualizing Causes for Lack of Recognition: Capacities, Costs and Understanding". *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 25: 25–43. https://journals.sussex.ac.uk/article/view/45/40

Ikäheimo, Heikki (2018): "From the Old Hegel to the Young Marx and Back: Two Sketches of an Evaluative Ontology of the Human Life-Form". In Jan Kandiyali (ed.): *Reassessing Marx's Social and Political Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 83–101.

Ikäheimo, Heikki (2021): "Return to Reification: An Attempt at Systematization". In: Heikki Ikäheimo, Kristina Lepold and Titus Stahl (eds.): *Recognition and Ambivalence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 191–222.

Ikäheimo, Heikki (forthcoming-a): "Recognition and Recognizability as Human: Learning from Butler and Manne". *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*.

Ikäheimo, Heikki (forthcoming-b): "Intersubjective Recognition and Personhood as Membership in the Life-Form of Persons". In: Heikki Ikäheimo, Arto Laitinen, Michael Quante and Italo Testa (eds.): *The Social Ontology of Personhood*.

Ikäheimo, Heikki and Laitinen, Arto (2010): "Esteem for Contributions to the Common Good – the Role of Personifying Attitudes and Instrumental Value". In: Michael Seymour (ed.):: *The Plural States of Recognition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 98–121.

Iser, Matthias (2008): *Empörung und Forschritt. Grundlagen einer kritischen Theorie der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag.

Jütten, Timo (2015): "Is the Market a Sphere of Social Freedom?". *Critical Horizons* 16 (2): 187–203.

Kauppinen, Antti (2002): "Reason, Recognition, and Internal Critique". *Inquiry* 45 (Nr. 4, S): 479–498.

Laitinen, Arto and Särkelä, Arvi (2018): "Analyzing Conceptions of Social Pathology: Eight Questions". *Studies in Social & Political Thought* 28: 21–30.

Laitinen, Arto and Särkelä, Arvi (2019): "Four Conceptions of Social Pathology". *European Journal of Social Theory* 22 (1): 80–102. https://journals.sussex.ac.uk/index.php/sspt/article/view/85

Marshall, Thomas H. (1963): "Citizenship and Social Class". In: *Sociology at the Crossroads and Other Essays*. London: Heinemann, 67ff.

Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich (1975): *Marx & Engels Collected Works*. Vol. 3. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Neuhouser, Frederick (2000): *Actualizing Freedom: The Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Quante, Michael (2002): *Personales Leben und menschlicher Tod*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Quante, Michael (2009): *Karl Marx Ökonomisch-Philosophische Manuskripte. Kommentar von Michael Quante*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Quante, Michael (2011): "Recognition as the Social Grammar of Species Being in Marx". In: Heikki Ikäheimo and Arto Laitinen (eds.): *Recognition and Social Ontology*. Leiden: Brill, S. 239–267.

Renault, Emmanuel (2019 [2004]): *The Experience of Injustice—A Theory of Recognition*. Translated by Richard A. Lynch. New York: Columbia University Press.

Särkelä, Arvi (2017): "Degeneration of Associated: Life: Dewey's Naturalism About Social Criticism". *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 53 (1): 107–126.

Särkelä, Arvi (2018): *Immanente Kritik und soziales Leben: Selbsttransformative Praxis nach Hegel und Dewey (Klostermann Weisse Reihe)* (Vol. 2). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag.

Schmidt Am Busch, Hans-Christoph: "Anerkennung" als *Prinzip der Kritischen Theorie*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.

Schmidt Am Busch, Hans-Christoph and Zurn Christopher (eds.) (2009): *Anerkennung*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Smith, Adam (1976 [1776]): *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Vol. I. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilhelm, Dagmar (2021): *Axel Honneth—Reconceiving Social Philosophy*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Zurn, Christopher (2000): "Anthropology and Normativity: A Critique of Axel Honneth's 'formal conception of ethical life'". *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 26 (Nr. 1, S): 115–124.

Zurn, Christopher (2015): *Axel Honneth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.