

Axel Honneth's Critical Pedagogy for a Renewed Socialist-Global Society

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Abstract

This paper provides an alternative way of linking Honneth's claims on critical theory with his view of education. It addresses the question whether Honneth's view of education bear the ramifications of his early theory of recognition, and how it does come into play in the current strand of his thought in his later works. Honneth's own description of doing critical theory is then appropriated to education in the phrase "critical pedagogy with normative content." The development of Honneth's thought from his theory of recognition to his notion of social freedom is first mapped out which provides the foundation for the discussion of the moral-practical dimension of education in the second part. The last part surveys the normative goals of critical pedagogy in praxis from Honneth's own experience as an educator and critical theorist, from methods employed by other researchers who employed Honneth's theory as well as from local practices of social critique.

Keywords: *Axel Honneth, Critical Pedagogy with Normative Content, Recognition, Social Freedom, Renewed Socialism*

Introduction

The appropriation of critical theory is described by Paolo Bolaños as congruent to a more practical approach in the study of philosophy. He admonishes “a shift from a purely speculative-metaphysical stance to a theoretico-materialist-practical stance” in doing philosophy that is “sensitive to social realities from within and not from without.”¹ This practicality is grounded on critical theory’s socio-political approach to reality, becoming then “an appropriate theoretico-diagnostic tool in appraising social pathologies”² that facilitate social emancipation from injustices and bondage. Bolaños particularly cites Axel Honneth’s ethics of recognition as an “alternative language”³ to philosophical understanding in its flight from essentialism to normativity⁴ — the anthropologically and institutionally constitutive standard practices of human persons.

Launching from Bolaños’ platform, this paper extends his appraisal of Honneth’s social theory into education which, for this author, is a most viable move to effect emancipation.

¹ Paolo A. Bolaños, “The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations: Some Notes on Axel Honneth’s Materialist Philosophical Anthropology,” in *SURI: The Official Journal of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines*, 1:1 (2012), 24.

² Paolo A. Bolaños, “What is Critical Theory?” Max Horkeimer and the Makings of the Frankfurt School Tradition” in *Mabini Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines*, 2:1 (2013), 17.

³ Bolaños, “The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations: Some Notes on Axel Honneth’s Materialist Philosophical Anthropology,” 24.

⁴ Nonetheless, in his paper “The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations: Some Notes on Axel Honneth’s Materialist Philosophical Anthropology,” Bolaños dwells only within Honneth’s earlier works namely *The Struggle for Recognition, Disrespect and Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*.

This is based on the claim that for Honneth, “education and the school system are considered to be a social precondition of democracy.”⁵ In his later works, Honneth puts premium on the notion of social freedom which he perceives to culminate in the idea of a “democratic ethical life” or, in what he recently called, a “renewed socialism.” This paper provides an alternative way of linking Honneth’s claims on critical theory with his view of education which has only recently come into print in the essay “Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: A Neglected Chapter of Political Philosophy”⁶ where he traces the decoupling of democratic theory and pedagogical practice then, reconstructs the project of democratic education. This addresses the question whether Honneth’s view of education bear the ramifications of his early theory of recognition, and how it does come into play in the current strand of his thought in his later works. The paper proposes to appropriate Honneth’s own description of doing critical theory to education in the phrase “critical pedagogy with normative content.”

To substantiate what this means, the paper first traces the development of Honneth’s thought from his theory of recognition to what he now dubs as a theory of social freedom. This will constitute the first part where the basic claims of recognition as an ontological ground, disrespect as normative basis of social critique and his concept of social freedom are presented. In *Freedom’s Right* (2014), the idea of a “democratic ethical life” is something achieved only through the confluence of the forms of social freedom which Honneth further develops in his renewal of the original idea of socialism in the book *The Idea of Socialism* (2017). Socialism redefined would be the consummation of social freedom realized within the institutionalized recognitive spheres. All these will provide the framework for what can already be

⁵ Odin Lysaker and Jonas Jakobsen, “Introduction” in *Recognition and Freedom Axel Honneth’s Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 14.

⁶ Axel Honneth, “Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: A Neglected Chapter of Political Philosophy” in *Recognition and Freedom Axel Honneth’s Political Thought*, 17-32.

construed as a “critical pedagogy with normative content” in the second part of the paper. The moral-practical base of education situates pedagogy within the theoretical matrix of recognition where its basic critical components are extracted. Then, social freedom is established as the normative-practical goal of critical pedagogy steered along a holistic trajectory by taking renewed socialism as its theoretical resource for praxis. This will allow education to appear as both a strategic locus for the praxis of democracy and the instrument through which democracy becomes a normative political culture. The last part surveys the normative goals of critical pedagogy in praxis within Honneth’s own experience as an educator and critical theorist. Methods employed by other researchers who employed Honneth’s theory as well as local practices of social critique will also be consolidated as possible “pathways” through which the emancipative goal of critical pedagogy with normative content could be achieved.

From Recognition to Social Freedom

Axel Honneth has consistently insisted his approach as a critical theorist in the Frankfurt School tradition as doing social theory “with moral-practical intention.”⁷ In line with critical theory’s distinctive project of resituating social critique into the concrete everyday human experience and the dislocation of the praxis of emancipation from a single class revolution,⁸ Honneth finds in the struggle for recognition that he retrieves from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, “the

⁷ Gonçalo, Marcelo, “Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth” in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. 39:2 (January 2013), 213.

⁸ Bolaños summarizes the three-fold assumptions of Frankfurt School Critical Theory into “(1) the anthropological turn, (2) emancipation from slavery and the abolition of social injustice, (3) and the shift from a class-based critique to a kind of social critique that goes beyond any social class.” Bolaños, “What is Critical Theory? Max Horkheimer and the Makings of the Frankfurt School Tradition,” 6.

foundations for a social theory with normative content.”⁹ This he worked out in his signature book *The Struggle for Recognition* where he was able to come up with an empirically based human phylogeny and ontogeny through a reinterpretation of Hegel's early writings in Jena via George Herbert Mead's social psychology. Recognition in other words is, borrowing Heikki Ikaheimo's term, the “ontological”¹⁰ foundation for the identity formation of persons. Honneth also finds in the struggle for recognition the normative basis for social critique — namely, the individual's experience of disrespect. From Hegel, Honneth asserts “first, that successful ego-development presupposes a certain sequence of forms of reciprocal recognition and, second, that subjects are informed of the absence of this recognition by experiencing disrespect in such a way that they see themselves obliged to engage in a 'struggle for recognition'.”¹¹

Briefly, there are three spheres of recognition generally experienced that contribute to the progress of moral autonomy. First is care or love wherein according to Honneth, Hegel first employs the term recognition to refer to the initial experience of knowing oneself-in-the-other within the intimate familial relationship.¹² This recognition which addresses the singularity¹³ of a person is where one first gains

⁹ Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. by Joel Anderson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 1.

¹⁰ Heikki Ikaheimo explains that recognition is both an ontological and ethical concept. In one sense, “subjects develop into persons through recognition, that is, by taking, and being taken by, others as persons” ... in another sense “*the extent to which persons so recognize and are recognized mutually is a decisive measure with which we judge the ethical quality or goodness of life as persons.*” Heikki Ikaheimo, “Making the Best of what We Are: Recognition as an Ontological and Ethical Concept” in *The Philosophy of Social Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* Edited by Hans-Cristoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher F. Zurn (Plymouth, Lexington Books: 2010), 346.

¹¹ Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, 69.

¹² *Ibid.*, 37.

¹³ See Renante Pilapil's summary of the three spheres of recognition where he employs the term “singularity” in the first sphere to answer the

practical self-knowledge, trust and self-confidence crucial for the development of a healthy personality and is precursory to the next sphere of recognition. The second is respect which addresses the universality of the subject as a being entitled to equal rights with his fellowman that should be accorded by the legal order. And the third is the sphere of esteem which recognizes the subject as a particularly unique individual who is capable of contributing his share towards the flourishing of the society.

Disrespect¹⁴ in the context of these three spheres would be the absence or deprivation of recognition. Honneth cites torture and rape as a clear example of disrespect in the first sphere which “does a lasting damage to one’s basic confidence (learned through love) that one can autonomously coordinate one’s own body.”¹⁵ What is destructive in this attempt to control a person’s body “is not the purely physical pain but rather the combination of this pain with the feeling of being defenselessly at the mercy of another subject, to the point of feeling that one has been deprived of reality.”¹⁶ Cases of disrespect in the second sphere would be instances where an individual is “structurally excluded from the possession of certain rights within a society.”¹⁷ For Honneth, the injury here “lies not just in the forcible restriction of personal autonomy but also in the combination with the feeling of not enjoying the status of a full-fledged partner to interaction, equally

question *which* person one is, “universalizable interests of all members of the society” in the second sphere, and “particularity” in the third sphere to describe the unique kind of person one is as member of a social group. Renante Pilapil, *Recognition: Examining Identity Struggles* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015), 66-84.

¹⁴ Honneth devotes another book-length analysis of disrespect where he claims this to be “the systematic key to a comprehensive theory of recognition that attempts to clarify the sense in which institutionalized patterns of social recognition generate justified demands on the way subjects treat each other.” Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundation of Critical Theory*, trans. by John Farell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), xiii.

¹⁵ Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 132.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

endowed with moral rights.”¹⁸ On the other hand to downgrade certain patterns of self-realization wounds up an individual who has embodied that society's cultural patterns. This “insult” or “cultural degradation” according to Honneth “typically brings with it a loss of personal self-esteem, of the opportunity to regard themselves as beings whose traits and abilities are esteemed.”¹⁹ Henceforth, as the title of the book itself articulates straightforwardly, disrespect for Honneth is the normative foundation of critical theory.

Social critique then is geared more normatively towards the articulation of concrete experiences of misrecognition or reification²⁰ that unlocks the emancipative potentials of social struggles. For Honneth, “the experience of disrespect is always accompanied by affective sensations that are, in principle, capable of revealing to individuals the fact that certain forms of recognition are being withheld from them.”²¹ The task is to expose these forms of misrecognition to pave the way for praxis towards self-realization. In another work, *The Fragmented World of the Social* (1995), Honneth mentions the “consciousness of injustice” as the normative basis for the moral claims of the “suppressed masses.”²² This highlights only in the socio-political level the experience of disrespect as the condition for the emancipative struggle for recognition which could be facilitated once they are rendered “public and forced below the threshold of political articulation.”²³

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 134.

²⁰ Honneth describes reification as “forgetfulness of recognition” in which he means that “in the course of our acts of cognition, we lose our attentiveness to the fact that this cognition owes its existence to an antecedent act of recognition.” Axel Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 59.

²¹ Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 136.

²² Axel Honneth, *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*, Edited by Charles W. Wright (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 209.

²³ Ibid., 212.

In *Freedom's Right* however, Honneth performs a methodological shift “from a philosophical-anthropological identity-formation to an investigation of historical-reconstructive theory about modern freedom.”²⁴ In this work, he appraises freedom as the most dominant value in the society today²⁵ and as the most entwined with modern conceptions of justice.²⁶ He writes that “the idea of individual self-determination is the normative point of reference for all modern conceptions of justice” so much so that “what is just is that which protects, fosters or realizes the autonomy of all members of society.”²⁷ Honneth attempts to come up with a theory of justice through social analysis in response to what he identified as the deficit of contemporary political philosophy’s fixation on purely normative principles (decoupled from an analysis of society).²⁸ He finds Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* as the model for this project in assigning “Right” to the elements of social reality where freedom is institutionalized (in Hegel’s time) thereby gaining both substance and legitimacy. In retrospect, Hegel rationally demonstrated that freedom is objectively realized gradually in

²⁴ Odin Lysaker and Jonas Jakobsen, “Introduction,” 3.

²⁵ “... of all the ethical values prevailing and competing for dominance in modern society, only one has been capable of leaving a truly lasting impression on our institutional order: freedom, i.e. the autonomy of the individual.” Axel Honneth, *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, trans. by Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 15.

²⁶ The shape of justice nonetheless will take form depending on the notion of freedom embodied in a theory..Aside from social freedom Honneth classifies two other models of freedom in modernity according to which justice may also take shape: negative and reflexive freedom. In broad strokes negative freedom, emphasizes “freedom from” impediments to self-realisation whose determination is ultimately ordained by no less than the self. “It focuses entirely,” Honneth writes, “on the “external liberation of action.” Ibid., 28. Reflexive freedom, which in turn could be initially suggested by “freedom to” “focuses solely on the subject’s relation-to-self” that is, “individuals are free if their actions are solely guided by their own intentions.” Ibid., 29. However, though autonomy and self-determination may already be implicit in this category, Honneth points out that it “stops short of the conditions that enable the exercise of freedom in the first place.” Ibid., 40.

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

the ethical substance (*Sittlichkeit*) of the family, civil society and the state.²⁹ Following this mold, Honneth provides a scaffolding for the missing historical and institutional³⁰ character of the spheres of recognition in his earlier work. As a result, he was able to reframe the idea of justice based on the spheres of recognition in the society.³¹

Justice corresponds to the present embodiments of social freedom in the institutions of personal relationships, market economy and democratic will-formation. This modified version of Hegel's ethical life is evidently grounded on the spheres of care, respect and esteem which are now established by Honneth as institutionalized within the current historical facticity. There are also three forms of justice immanent within these institutions of recognition based on their respective existing normative values for self-realization. Personal relationships for instance represent social relations "whose reciprocal fulfillment allows us to experience the intersubjective realization of our respective individuality"³² through the institutions of friendship, intimate relationships and family. The market economy on the other hand is normatively not a value-free system run by the invisible hand of supply and demand but an institution of mutual recognition "between economic actors who grant each other equal rights to maximize individual utility"³³ in the spheres of consumption and labour market. It is an institution of social freedom because honour and freedom is supposed to be recognized in the market-mediated labor³⁴ based on the normative principles of equal opportunity, improvements in

²⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science The First Philosophy of Right*, trans. by J. Michael Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 137.

³⁰ These are the two corrections he says he would make if given the chance to revise *Struggle for Recognition*. Marcelo, "Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth," 210-211.

³¹ Honneth, *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, vii.

³² *Ibid.*, 134.

³³ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

the workplace and co-determination.”³⁵ Finally, the sphere of democratic deliberation and will-formation is an embodiment of freedom referring to “the institution of the democratic ‘public’ or ‘public sphere’, a social space in which citizens form generally acceptable beliefs through deliberative discussion, beliefs that form the principles to be obeyed by the legislature in accordance with the rule of law.”³⁶

Justice therefore consists not in the determination of what is due based on an externally imposed principle detached from the given social reality but rather on the determination of the legitimacy of values in the given institutions of recognition or, in Honneth’s own words, in “judging individual questions of legitimacy.”³⁷ What makes personal relationships just is that it is the institutionalization of love where individual ego identity takes shape. Injustices in this sphere would be those which hamper the formation of relationships or wound up such relationships of love like in cases of physical or psychological torture and discrimination of same sex-relationships. What makes the market economy just is the institutionalization of respect as accorded and protected by laws to the work of individuals. Injustices would be brought about by insufficient compensation to labor weighed under the principle of achievement and the reduction of work to the pure scale of capital. Finally what makes democratic public sphere immanently just is the empowerment accorded to individuals when they are esteemed as being capable to participate in social building through deliberation and will-formation. The opposite of which is humiliation and social exclusion, or acts against solidarity. Overall, for Honneth “justice must entail granting all members of society the opportunity to participate in institutions of recognition.”³⁸ Social freedom and social justice therefore signifies the confluence of these institutions of recognition which Honneth construes as the substance of a

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 252

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 254

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

“democratic ethical life.” This is where Honneth performs his reconstruction of socialism as a theoretical source of orientation for praxis.

In *The Idea of Socialism* Honneth attempts to steer the theses in his earlier work *Freedom's Right* into a more practical aim of “transforming the social order.”³⁹ Honneth clarifies nonetheless that his normative reconstruction of socialism is less concerned with the strategic question of how socialism could influence current political events than with the purpose “to make it once again a source of political-ethical orientations.”⁴⁰ The emergence of the original idea of socialism in Honneth's account comes already as a form of critique: Firstly, the way the term was first introduced to philosophical discourse in the second half of the eighteenth century came as a call for a more humanly based legislation⁴¹; Secondly, socialism, as a term that referred already to “a movement towards the future”⁴² sought to reconcile the values of freedom, equality and fraternity inspired by the French Revolution in order to resist the alienating capitalist market expansion and “make the existing society more ‘social’ by establishing collective organizations.”⁴³ Honneth opines

³⁹ Axel Honneth, *The Idea of Socialism: Towards a Renewal*, trans. by Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), viii.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5. It is also worth remembering that Honneth differentiates Critical theory from the direct political involvement of a theory. The former is a task carried out by a theoretician “to give the best possible interpretations of already institutionalized spheres of recognition in terms of moral progress.” The latter on the other hand is “to invoke the theory in a political manner” which is then performed by an individual as a citizen. Marcelo, “Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth,” 214.

⁴¹ “The term “socialism” was introduced much earlier to philosophical discourse when, in the second half of the eighteenth century, Catholic theologians sought to expose the German theory of ‘natural law’ as a dangerous misconception. At this time, the term ‘socialistae’ (a neologism derived from the Latin ‘socialis’) referred to a tendency in the works of Grotius and Pufendorf, who were accused of claiming that the legal order of society should be founded on the human need for ‘sociality’ rather than divine revelation.” Honneth, *The Idea of Socialism*, 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

that the early group of socialists namely Robert Owen and his followers, the Saint-Simonists and the Fourierists as well as the second wave of socialists comprised of Louis Blanc and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon unanimously identified the idea of freedom being instilled by industrialist capitalism as contradictory to the values of equality and fraternity in as much as it only placed premium on self-aggrandizement and profit accumulation. Operating solely on the law of supply and demand, the capitalist market slipped out of the control of the wider social will which resulted into the concentration of economic power to the landowners and private factory owners while leaving the majority of the working population in impoverished and unjust conditions.⁴⁴ As an act of resistance to the expansion of industrialist capitalism, the

Early socialists demanded that the economic sphere be subjected to social directives not only in order to fend off the evils of a merely partial moralization of society, one that stops short of the threshold of the economy, nor merely ensure a more just distribution of resources by means of a new economic order, but rather to ensure that production serve the moral purpose of stripping liberty proclaimed by the French Revolution of its merely private and self-interested character.⁴⁵

As an immanent critique of the capitalist order, socialism sought to redefine freedom as a form of free cooperation among equally free subjects thereby re-establishing the harmony between the three normative values of the French Revolution. It was Karl Marx however who rendered more conceptually the synthesis between the seeming contradictory features of liberty and solidarity. In Honneth's interpretation, Marx understood needs as something mutually recognized between persons so that when they work, they don't only work *with* each other but

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 13

most importantly *for* each other as well. This guarantees that their work as members of the society is indeed free from coercion and is intersubjectively shared.⁴⁶ Honneth explains that the original idea of socialism was never solely concerned with distributive justice but is essentially based on a communitarian form of life. This entails that the satisfaction of individual needs and realization of individual freedoms actually depend upon intersubjective relations of mutual reciprocity. True liberty cannot be achieved alone but in “mutual sympathy found only in communities of solidarity.”⁴⁷ What Honneth refers to as social freedom in the preceding considerations is the consummation of the original socialist revolution where all three principles of liberty, equality and fraternity have been harmonized.

The failure of early socialism however and its eventual decline to spark social action was traced by Honneth in the socio-theoretical horizon within which the early socialists developed and tried to carry out their shared notion of social freedom. There are three assumptions identified by Honneth: “the economic sphere as the locus of the struggle over the appropriate form of freedom; the reflexive attachment to an already present oppositional movement; and, finally, the historical-philosophical expectation of the inevitable victory of the movement.”⁴⁸ The first one reduces the revolutionary energy into the sphere of the economic system within the conceptual background that alienated labor alone calls for emancipation in as much as work itself alone is freedom’s objectification. Thus it is linked to the second assumption that the most affected sector of injustices would then be the major player to facilitate the revolution, in this case the proletariat as the already existing “oppositional group” who only needs to be educated and to be enlightened of their plight. Consistently shared by all socialists furthermore is the belief in the historical necessity of the downfall of capitalism: that “the capitalist market will either be destroyed by the crisis it

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 23

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

creates, unleash economic forces of collectivization, or produce ever stronger resistance as a result of impoverishment.”⁴⁹

According to Honneth, the socialists failed to see the other facets through which freedom assumes other forms such as the sphere of political deliberation. The confinement of freedom to social labor shows the ties of early socialism to the spirit of industrial capitalism which it was hardly able to distance itself from. This prevented them from exploring and “experimenting” on other avenues through which social freedom could be achieved. Honneth sides with John Dewey’s criticism of traditional socialism of “being incapable of taking up an experimental stance towards historical processes of transformation”⁵⁰ on the simply logical point that “if the capitalist social transformation will certainly be followed by a socialist order, then there will no longer be any need to explore already existing potentials and find out which measures are most appropriate for attaining the desired information.”⁵¹ At this point in his reconstruction of socialism, Honneth introduces two pathways of renewal towards which the promise of social freedom could be reoriented: First is a view of history that avoids the pitfalls of historical necessity upheld by the antiquated socialism, labeled as “historical experimentalism”; second is the idea of a democratic form of life which amplifies, in renewed socialism, the notion of social freedom that Honneth has already worked out in *Freedom’s Right*.

Honneth draws from John Dewey the articulation of his perspective on historical experimentation which in closer analysis rehearses some of his even earlier standpoints on the normative foundations of critical theory. History is not fixedly oriented on a single course but is filled with potentialities waiting to be unleashed when the barriers to communication between members of the society are removed so that

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 30 .

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 59

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

everyone affected can take part in the social will formation.⁵² Taking this normative guideline which Dewey accords to finding the most comprehensive answer to problematic situations through social inclusion ensures that problems are articulated well and the most intelligent and best solutions are come up with by the members themselves in the process of free interaction.⁵³ This entails however an ear and sensitivity to the voice of the isolated and excluded individuals who struggle for the recognition of their identities and outcry experiences of injustices which may have been caused, whether intentionally and indirectly or otherwise, by non-representation or misrepresentation in the society as a whole. For Honneth experimentalism is the methodological path which could be taken as history unfolds so that potentials for solving social problems will grow and improvements in the society are established more cooperatively. Initially therefore, in a renewed fashion, Honneth now suggests that:

Socialism must be viewed as the specific modern articulation of the fact that in the course of history and on the basis of varying social circumstances, new groups constantly seek to draw public attention to their own demands by attempting to tear down barriers to communication and thereby expand the space of social freedom. Such a "struggle" certainly characterizes the entirety of human history and continues even today; after all, in the course of the expansion of social interaction and the increase of political connections, new collectives are repeatedly faced with a lack of recognition for their concerns. In each case, the only possibility for attaining such recognition is to invoke already implicitly accepted norms and

⁵² *Ibid.*, 60-63.

⁵³ Immediately recognizable is the resemblance of this claim to Honneth's notion of the collective articulation of disrespect as a requirement for resistance and political action as well as Honneth's take on the specific task of social philosophy in the diagnosis of social pathologies.

thereby to demand the right to have a say in the formulation of social rules.⁵⁴

A renewed socialism therefore can no longer simply reduce the revolutionary initiative to a single class movement but has to extend it to the wider stakeholders of the society. Hence the democratic form of life is put to the fore as the characteristically fit description of socialism as it has to accommodate especially the marginalized members of the society. The economic sphere as well can no longer be the only locus for the realization of freedom lest other institutionalized forms of freedom in the current social landscape be excluded. As the task of the analysis of justice mentioned above consists in judging questions of legitimacy, socialism's realizability, according to Honneth, will depend on its "capacity to bring about institutional reforms *within the given social reality* — reforms that point toward future change (Italics mine)."⁵⁵ However this change is not something predetermined and reforms will always come with an aura of tentativity. It is for this reason that socialism must take a reflexive stance towards itself in "tracing its own intentions to regain confidence in the realizability of its visions in the future."⁵⁶ At each every moment however, it is the conditions for social freedom or the "democratic ethical life" as stated above that must be prepared by emancipating the spheres of personal relationships, economy and democratic politics from coercion.⁵⁷ Honneth's identification of an emancipated society with the democratic form of life is evidently inscribed in his description:

"Democracy" does not merely signify free and equal participation in political will-formation; understood as an entire way of life, it means that individuals can participate equally at every central point in the

⁵⁴ Honneth, *The Idea of Socialism*, 65.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

mediation between the individual and society, such that each functionally differentiated sphere reflects the general structure of democratic participation.⁵⁸

Honneth compares the democratic society into an organ with differentiated parts functioning independently but at the same integrated into a single whole. But how to go about with this goal of emancipation and organic interaction among the three spheres, Honneth aligns himself again with Dewey in identifying that only through the process of unrestricted communication can unused potentials be unleashed. Hence the steering organ fit to facilitate this process would be the sphere of democratic action in as much as it is the arena of free interaction: the public sphere is “the authority within a functionally arranged society that should take over the task of integrative steering.”⁵⁹ Honneth ascribes now to democracy both the diagnostic and therapeutic function of critical theory and political praxis. This is evident in his statement that “due to the plurality of voices and perspectives, citizens’ cooperation would enable them to quickly notice problems in individual spheres and in their interaction, thus also enabling a number of proposals for modifications.”⁶⁰ Likewise, on the agency of emancipation: “The citizens assembled in the democratic public sphere are the only ones who can be convinced to tear down existing limitations and blockages cautiously in order to enable free cooperation in all major social spheres.”⁶¹

The Moral-Practical Base of Education

To describe education in general as having a moral-practical dimension is to situate it within the normative ground of recognition through which subjects develop gradually their autonomy. This implies that the

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

anthropological and critical claims of Honneth's social theory become the theoretical framework for understanding education itself. This has been performed already and served productively a number of studies and researches in philosophy and educational research.⁶² Yet, in the same way that Honneth's theory of recognition has been a viable framework for pedagogical researches, it has also been a fruitful source for some critics' evaluation and discontent of Honneth's stance and treatment of education.⁶³ This paper on

⁶² See Rauno Huttunen's articles "Discourse and Recognition as Normative grounds for Radical Pedagogy: Habermasian and Honnethian Ethics in the Context of Education" in *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 31:31 (March 2012) 137-152, and "Critical Adult Education and the Political Philosophical Debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth" in *Educational Theory*, 57:4 (2007) 423-433, as well as an article co-authored with Hannu Heikkinen "Teaching and the Dialectic of Recognition" in *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 12:2 (2004) 163-174, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681360400200194>; In the area of adult education, Ted Fleming has an article "Reclaiming the Emancipatory Potential of Adult Education: Honneth's Critical theory and the Struggle for Recognition" in *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 7:1, (2016) 13-24, DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela9077 and another paper co-authored with Linden West and Fergal Finnegan "Connecting Bourdieu, Winnicott, and Honneth: Understanding the experiences of non-traditional learners through an interdisciplinary lens" in *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 45:2, (Autumn 2013). Individual papers on diverse topics by various authors include Alan Bainsbridge's "Pedagogy of Recognition: Winnicott, Honneth and Learning in Psychosocial Spaces" in *Journal of Pedagogic Development*, 5:3, 9-25; Manuel Goncalves Barbosa and Angel Garcia Del Dujo's "Education and Struggles for Recognition: the Strategic Role of Empowerment" in *Revisita Española* año LXXIV, 264 (mayo-agosto 2016) 100-200; Joaquin Gil Martinez's "Recognition and Emotions: A Critical Approach on Education" in *Procedia — Social and Behavioral Sciences* 46 (2012) 3925-3930; Mark Murphy's "On Recognition and Respect: Honneth, Intersubjectivity and Education" in *Educational Futures*, 2:2 (January 2010) 3-11; Fredrik Sandberg and Chris Kubiak's "Recognition of Prior Learning, Self-realisation and Identity within Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition" in *Studies in Continuing Education*, 35:3 (2013); and, Benjamin Seznick and David Schafer's "Online Higher Education and Axel Honneth's Social Freedom" in *Threshold*, 40:1 (2017) 6-20.

⁶³ See Jenn Dumm and Robert Guay's "Hegel and Honneth's Theoretical Deficit: Education, Social Freedom and the Institutions of Modern Life" in *Hegel Bulletin*, 38:2 (2017), 293—317, doi:10.1017/hgl.2017.14; see also Teemu

the other hand delineates that a critical pedagogy in Honneth's treatment of education is normatively oriented towards the prospect of a democratic form of life that epitomizes social freedom.

In the essay "Recognition and Justice", Honneth writes that "successful identity formation possesses a societal 'public' side."⁶⁴ This is because individuation can only be rendered possible via socialization. Or in Honneth's own words: "the possibility of the single subject's realizing individual autonomy depends on the precondition of being able to develop an intact self-relationship by experiencing social recognition."⁶⁵ And if there's one institution beyond the family where an individual is immediately exposed to the public it would be the school where education is a process experienced in a daily routine.

Charles Bingham, who employs recognition theory in the analysis of education and identity formation in his book *Schools of Recognition: Identity Politics and Classroom Practices* (2001), begins with the claim that schools are public spaces where the interplay of recognition is substantially at work. By public space he means that "the school is a common place where people of diverse identities and opinions come together to deliberate, to negotiate, to compromise, or to decide on policies that will foster a common democracy that encourages diverse identities."⁶⁶ Basically, in the school the self publicly encounters others who are outside of his kin and builds a relationship that contributes to the formation of his identity through the image that results from their interaction. Bingham, using Charles Taylor's metaphor, calls this form of

Hanhela's "Axel Honneth's Idea of a Drawn-out Process of Education" in *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 22:3 (2014), and "The Problematic challenges of Misrecognition for Pedagogic Action" in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 46:1 (2014).

⁶⁴ Axel Honneth, "Recognition and Justice: Outline of A Plural Theory of Justice," in *Acta*

Sociologica, 47:4 (2004), 355.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁶⁶ Charles Bingham, *Schools of Recognition: Identity Politics and Classroom Practices* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 31.

recognition mirroring. “Mirrors,” he writes, “not only ‘reflect’ us, they constitute us. When we look at a mirror, we not only look to see who we already were, we also gain information about ourselves.”⁶⁷ As a public space, the school in other words operates within the language of recognition.

To describe school education as normatively grounded in recognition is to conversely affirm *ab initio* that the school is a site of struggles for recognition, as a place for identity formation through reciprocal recognition and a venue where misrecognition, interrupted ego-identity and suffering are experienced as well. Due to that normativity of school education, a critical approach evinces itself as a demand called-forth in pedagogy. It is significant and noteworthy that Honneth himself affirms, in the interview with Gonçalo Marcelo, that it was his school experience that animated what he would later develop in his theory. Honneth’s narrative reveals the personal background of some of the features of his thought that could be analyzed thematically:

Looking back now, I think that **it was in high school when I first became aware of what I would later try to explain with the help of the concept of the struggle for recognition.** There was a certain upward mobility, as a whole generation was coming to high school for the first time. Those members of the working class, who for the first time came to the high school, felt a certain shame, due to their own class position, which was extremely interesting to notice. But I noticed that pre-theoretically, let’s say. It didn’t mobilize me directly. Shortly before the student movement, when I was still in high school, **I was strongly opposed to such movements because I thought they were too radical, too empty in their goals.** I never believed in the proletarian revolution. After I left high school I became a member of the youth organization of the Social Democrats in that area. This came all of a

⁶⁷ Ibid., 34.

sudden, as I wasn't very politicized before. But **it was clearly the opening up of a kind of cultural struggle against my own class background.** Not that I didn't love my parents, but I disliked very strongly the empty bourgeois culture in which I grew up. So it was culturally that I came into politics (Highlights mine).⁶⁸

This biographical account speaks of the moral-practical content of educational experience within the context of his social theory. Foremost, the gravity of the struggle for recognition as it occurs in the schools is obviously present in Honneth's experience. Awareness of individual identities is gained through the recognition accorded to them by others in the relational fabric of the educational structure. The experience of disrespect is likewise very manifest. In the same interview Honneth traces his sensitivity to suffering (a theme that runs ubiquitous in all his works) from school experience.⁶⁹ He reveals that this awareness of disrespect and suffering became not only the impetus for his intellectual vocation but also the root of his engagements with politics. Obviously this is a personal background of what he writes in *Struggle for Recognition* that "the experience of disrespect represents the affective source of knowledge for social resistance and collective uprisings."⁷⁰

In Honneth's account of his experience further, the experiential background of the moral-practical content of his social theory has manifested early at school in his distaste for "too radical movements" and revolution. This somehow explains biographically (as highlighted above) the mode of critique that characterizes his method of normative reconstruction. This brand of critique stems from his intention of staying on the foothold of ordinary everyday experience of struggles for recognition. It is an analysis of

⁶⁸ Marcelo, "Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth," 214.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 215-216.

⁷⁰ Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 143.

social practices whose recognitive potentials for self-realisation may have been reified and thus, either is in need of retrieval or reevaluation in the light of present demands and circumstances. Freedom is substantially inseparable from the concrete materiality of the human condition, the practices that constitute the social fabric on which an individual finds himself already situated in — or in other words, in normativity.⁷¹

With these consistent interweaving implications of Honneth's own experiences and the claims in his theory of recognition, it appears that the critical ingredients of education with a moral-practical content would be the consciousness-raising articulation of struggles, diagnostic-therapeutic critique and freedom oriented praxis.⁷² These three also follows the development of Honneth's thought from recognition to social freedom described in the previous part. The consciousness-raising articulation of struggle is a demand that impinges upon pedagogy immediately from the description of the school as a site of struggles for recognition. Critical pedagogy should render the school as an avenue for awareness of the social dimension of experience through which individuals develop their identity. This entails that the experience of disrespect and the moral claims of individuals will not be suppressed but instead, spaces will be opened up for the articulation of their silent voices. It is incumbent upon

⁷¹ Ronald Theaus Pada has comprehensively shown in his book that normativity is an essential element of freedom in Honneth's compendium. Roland Theaus Pada, *Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy of Recognition: Freedom, Normativity, and Identity* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017).

⁷² This mirrors Paolo Bolaños' description of critical theory as "philosophical praxis" which shows that Honneth's critical theory remains aligned with the general assumptions of the Frankfurt School. Bolaños, "The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations: Some Notes on Axel Honneth's Materialist Philosophical Anthropology," 18-20; Charles Bingham has a similar way of arranging Honneth's critical theory into the three steps of the experience of misrecognition, articulation and social action. Bingham, *Schools of Recognition: Identity Politics and Classroom Practices*, 48-51.

critical pedagogy therefore to protect the “affective sensations” that accompany the experience of disrespect from becoming reified especially within the educational institution itself. Honneth mentions that public education along with the media of the culture industry, or forums of political publicity become at present strategic agencies for domination in the form of “cultural exclusion.”⁷³ A deficit of social awareness and a privatistic motivation for education is also a symptom of domination that is effected by the school itself in the form of “institutionalized individuation.”⁷⁴ These instances occur when pedagogy is stripped of a critical approach to resist tendencies of oppression even within its own ground and the expressions of the experiences of injustices are suppressed. Honneth writes:

Only if the means of articulation of a social movement are available can the experience of disrespect become a source of motivation for acts of political resistance. The developmental logic of such collective movements can, however, only be discovered via an analysis that attempts to explain social struggles on the basis of the dynamics of moral experiences.⁷⁵

The consciousness-raising articulation of social struggles in other words must be simultaneous with the procedure of diagnostic-therapeutic critique. It must be

⁷³ “Processes of cultural exclusion are those strategies which limit the articulation chances of class-specific experiences of injustice by systematically withholding the appropriate linguistic and symbolic means for their expression.” Honneth, *The Fragmented World of the Social*, 213.

⁷⁴ “Processes of institutionalized individuation are all those strategies encouraged by the state or ordered by other organizations which attempt to counteract the danger of communicative agreement about group and class-specific experiences of injustice by either directly requiring or providing long-term support for individualistic action orientations. They destroy the communicative infrastructure which is the basis of a cooperative mobilization and elaboration of feelings of injustice.” *Ibid.*, 214.

⁷⁵ Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 139.

clarified however that Honneth originally ascribes social critique to social philosophy. To appropriate social critique as a procedure of critical pedagogy designates to education not only the task of learning, knowledge production and dissemination, but also of “determining and discussing processes of social development that can be viewed as misdevelopments (*Fehlentwicklungen*), disorders or ‘social pathologies’.”⁷⁶ Social critique is consciousness-raising in as much as it “can be understood as providing an instance of reflection (*Reflexionsinstanz*), within which criteria for successful forms of social life are discussed.”⁷⁷ The use of the medical term “pathology” as a metaphor is meant to highlight the interruption that the experiences of social misrecognition bring about to the development of a healthy personality and identity of persons in the same way that sickness suspends physical well-being. “Diagnosis” on the other hand emphasizes the empirical approach of critique which could materially effect social emancipation hence, “therapeutic.”

And finally, freedom oriented praxis is the normative goal of critical pedagogy which Honneth has already charted in his reconstruction of the institutions of freedom. In the essay on education, Honneth states more straightforwardly the project of emancipation which both pedagogy and political philosophy has originally shared in affinity. He traces this from Kant:

Through the prudent choice of means and methods, which is to say, in an ‘artful’ way, both pedagogy and political philosophy are meant to instruct us on how to effect a transition from a state of ‘minority’ to a state of freedom: be it with regard to a whole people, consisting of individual subjects, or be it with regard to a child still subjected to the rule of nature within himself.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundation of Critical Theory*, 4.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Honneth, “Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: A Neglected Chapter of Political Philosophy,” 17.

The realization and intermeshing of the institutionalized spheres of social recognition, as discussed in the first part of the paper, materializes a “democratic ethical life” which is the epitome of social freedom. This is tantamount to say that critical pedagogy must be oriented towards the renewed socialist agenda given that education is a precondition for democracy. In this vein, education is given a more social and practical orientation to fulfill. The advantage of re-orienting education within the conceptual blocks of a renewed socialism is that it is able to address holistically the differentiated needs and demands in the society. Without this wider normative role of education in mind, it will be perceived and utilized for purposes dictated by agencies motivated by profit and private interests as in the case of privately owned educational institutions bent on training students only in becoming efficient members of the labor force. While knowledge and skills training is of course a legitimate value catered to by the school, the deficit in its curriculum of addressing the other spheres of freedom would also result into a deficient aptitude of students in balancing engagement and participation beyond the labor market. Moreover, even the acquisition of capabilities to perform well in the market economy is not a guarantee for an emancipated labor in this sphere if individuals are not equipped with critical consciousness of their situation as stakeholders; they could simply be trained to work for mere privatistic reasons and without regard for social cohesion characteristic of the capitalist system. Honneth has earlier diagnosed capitalism as a misdevelopment⁷⁹ in the economic sphere, and educational institutions would be merely reproducing docile agents of this pathological system unless their curriculum is not critically oriented. In other words in the absence of critical pedagogy the educational institutions themselves will become bastions of coercion and docility to oppression.

On the other hand the predominance of personal relationships as motivations behind school education and the

⁷⁹ Honneth, *Freedom's Right*, 223-253.

disengagement from participation in the political will formation is even more socially detrimental. Honneth quotes Kant that public education should “foster in each pupil the virtues and capacities of a future citizen by sidestepping the danger of ‘perpetuating family defects’.”⁸⁰ Without explicitly stating it part of Honneth’s intention in his essay on education, of intertwining pedagogy and political philosophy as a course to take for public education, is to salvage it from being confined only into one sphere. He drew attention to the privatization of education in the perception of parents who send their children to school which is a symptom of what education has become at present — decoupled from democracy. Critical pedagogy on the other hand is meant to initiate individuals into the “we” of democratic will-formation. The training for citizenship in the public sphere is an educational task most fully called for in pedagogical institutions.

The school is the strategic locus for the education of students in the sense of enhancing the conditions for the exercise of their freedoms in the three spheres. And in the institutional level, the school may likewise be the micro-society for the “experimental” rehearsal of socialism in the sense of Honneth’s reorientation. This is launched from the premise that for Honneth, “socialism is a cosmopolitan

⁸⁰ Honneth, “Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: A Neglected Chapter of Political Philosophy,” 25. There is a difference however in that, while Kant thinks moral autonomy is acquired through the independent use of one’s own reason mediated by pedagogy, Honneth views education in the context of social interaction and democracy: “Kant is still quite far away from drawing conclusions with regard to the proper methods and organization of school teaching. He is thinking of the individual male pupil who is to develop self-esteem through the pedagogically mediated acquisition of knowledge, rather than of a cooperative community where each individual must be able to act as a recognized member in concert with all others for the purpose of joint decision-making. While at some points of his *Pedagogy* Kant senses that a republic has a much greater need for fostering the communicative virtues than it has for simply imparting knowledge, he still recoils from the consequence of identifying the public school first and foremost as a place where democratic capacities are formed. *Ibid.*, 26.

undertaking.”⁸¹ Social freedom is a normative value that transcends the boundaries of nation-states. Yet, its realization depends only on subjects situated in “geographical spaces with enough cultural and legal commonalities to enable public spheres to come about at all.”⁸² This shows that the socialist project is a global undertaking within a multiculturalist geographical setting. For Honneth multiculturalism is one of the current challenges that education is faced with today. And by multiculturalism, Honneth refers to the “heterogeneity of the population that composes the public sphere” whose differences emanate from culture and ethnicity. Perhaps Amy Gutmann, whose description of multiculturalism also relates it to the issue of politics and education, could render reinforcement in referring to it as the condition of “citizens with different cultural identities, often based on ethnicity, race, gender, or religion”⁸³ where the issue of recognition and equality come to the fore. Honneth ends his essay writing that

... at present we cannot even adequately imagine what that content (of democratic education) should be like fifteen or twenty years from now if fair and equal consideration is to be given to the cultural and ethnic composition of school classes. In order for those future pupils to grow into major participants in a highly heterogenous and colorfully mixed public sphere they will have to learn to approach history, literature, geography and most other subjects from the same sought of de-centralized perspective that we today are still struggling to gradually teach ourselves in the context of a number of academic disciplines.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Honneth, *The Idea of Socialism*, 102.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸³ Amy Gutmann, “Introduction” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

⁸⁴ Honneth, “Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: A Neglected Chapter of Political Philosophy,” 32.

The critics Jenn Dum and Robert Guay recently pointed out that Honneth did not develop the “distinctive aims and norms of education.”⁸⁵ This deficit could be justified in the context of Honneth’s admission, in the above quotation, of the work to be done further and tasks to be identified in the face of current challenges on education if it is once more reoriented to a democratic ideal. However, a second look at Honneth’s path’s of renewal for socialism reveals that multiculturalism is precisely the social condition on which “social experimentalism” can be carried out if “difference” will be perceived as a venue for learning experiences.⁸⁶ The more spaces of interaction are opened up to individuals and integrated into the society the more potentials could be tapped and more adequate solutions may be suggested to existing problems in the society. Applied into the context of school education, difference among students is the condition for their flourishing via inclusion and participation. In the words of Honneth:

The less a pupil is treated as an isolated subject meant to deliver a certain performance and the more he or she is approached as a member of a cooperative learning community the more likely the emergence of forms of communication that allow not only for playful acceptance of cultural differences but to positively conceive of such differences as opportunities for mutual enrichment.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Dum and Guay, “Hegel and Honneth’s Theoretical Deficit: Education, Social Freedom and the Institutions of Modern Life,” 293—317.

⁸⁶ A similar view was already expressed by Honneth in Anders Petersen and Rasmus Willig, “An Interview with Axel Honneth The Role of Sociology in the Theory of Recognition” in *European Journal of Social Theory* 5:2 (2002), 271-272.

⁸⁷ Honneth, “Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: A Neglected Chapter of Political Philosophy,” 31.

Critical pedagogy with this normative content towards social freedom is indeed a workable way towards social emancipation. Honneth's method of normative reconstruction is also just fit to appropriate and integrate in pedagogy because schools are situated in diverse locations in different societies with values which its members hold dear. These values however have to be critically examined in the light of current demands. Hence what remain to be seen are the concrete, practical and workable means to carry out a critical pedagogy with normative content.

The Normative Goals of Critical Pedagogy in Praxis

In retrospect, the three characteristics of critical pedagogy established through Honneth's social theory are: the consciousness-raising articulation of struggles, diagnostic-therapeutic critique and freedom oriented praxis. The moral-practical dimension of education requires the promotion of consciousness and resistance to forms of oppression in the society especially within the educational structure itself. This perspective does not confine pedagogy to mere utilitarian purposes such as providing and enhancing the capability to increase one's economic capital but also, and most importantly as an initiation to a life of autonomy; ever since the first generation of critical theorists in the Frankfurt tradition, education has already been reconceived with this critical ingredient.⁸⁸ A life of freedom nonetheless is inconsistent with conditions wherein coercion, docility, exclusion and non-participation persist. Critical pedagogy is the characteristic that surrounds an educational institution

⁸⁸ Theodor Adorno for example conceives the role of education in the moral development of individuals enabling students acquire autonomy and the awareness, knowledge and resistance from oppression. See Theodor Adorno and Helmutt Becker, "Education for Autonomy" in *Telos*, 55 (Spring 1983), 103-110; and "Education after Auschwitz" in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. by Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 191-204.

when it seeks to enhance those conditions for emancipation. Within Honneth's critical pedagogy the three spheres of recognition provides holistic practical orientations for the enhancement of the conditions for social freedom. This part will now trace how critical pedagogy has been practiced by Honneth based on his own experience as an educator and researcher in the Frankfurt School of Social Research. The available literature on educational and philosophical research appropriating Honneth's theory as well as the current local practices of philosophical social critique that strike resemblances of Honneth's brand of critical theory shall also be surveyed to supplement how the normative goals of critical pedagogy could be further achieved.

The interviews by Goncalo Marcelo, Anders Petersen and Rasmus Willig are valuable primary references for Honneth's own testimonies which may be read in comparison with his thematic treatment of pedagogy in the essay on education. What can be gleaned from the practices and suggestions by Honneth in these texts is the intertwining of the therapeutic-diagnostic approach of critical pedagogy with the methodological procedure of democracy which Honneth has described extensively in his renewal of socialism. In the interview with Marcelo, Honneth says:

As the director of the Institute for Social Research, I always try to influence the public, which means in Frankfurt that those who come first are not only the students but ordinary citizens. So what we are doing is having regular discussions, debates and lectures in the city, not in the university. We are going out to other places like libraries and theaters in the city, and we present either debates or studies on several topics, such as aspects of today's crisis. That's one way I try to connect theory with the social environment. There are other activities, too. I try to influence publishers to undertake some translations. I try to organize series of books. As an editorial member of a few journals, I try to encourage the right topics in those journals, and so

on. As intellectuals, we are playing all these roles at once, and I think we have to play them. We have to take very seriously the fact that sometimes you are working at your desk, but that many times you are working for the public, too. You should always try to build bridges toward the public and find the right ways to inform and to inspire the public and the public debate. These are the instruments I am now using to promote the commitment of Critical Theory to the public.⁸⁹

It is obvious here that an active engagement with social issues rather than simply being confined to the academic setting of teaching is a substantial characteristic of a critical pedagogy. The content of research must be those that come from social reality itself — problems and crises which are experienced and needs to be addressed. In this particular case of Honneth's testimony, an example is being set to educators and researchers who should carry out supposedly the aims of social freedom. While the immediate recipients of the labor of teachers and researchers are the students, the wider beneficiary of their work is actually the entire public which Honneth admonishes them to recognize within their purview. This is a reminder that an educational profession is not merely a private employment one has for his "bread and butter" but a work that serves the entire public. It is evident as well that Honneth perceives the instrumental function of education in the formation and citizenship to the public sphere.

At present it is the media that holds the leverage and power to influence the public on certain issues but unfortunately, the media has been proven to be utilized for private interests and have been weaponized for the maintenance of the influence of interested parties. In *Freedom's Right* Honneth traced that the initial formation of the public sphere was facilitated by the early forms of media such as newspapers, radio and television. The reification of

⁸⁹ Marcelo, "Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth," 220.

the media however began when it became an instrument of capitalism primarily for advertisement and efficient tool for the proliferation of the culture industry in Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's term. Critical pedagogy's task is to resist this utilization of the media by establishing avenues for informing the public and inciting them into discussions through an intelligent and participative critical use of the media itself. In the present time the use of the internet is perceived by Honneth as something that could advance the emancipative project if it will be subjected to a cooperative evaluation. This is what Honneth suggests in the essay that a critical scrutiny of the use of internet may be taken when students work together in identifying and examining the sources and content of data mined from the internet. In his renewal of socialism Honneth has earlier identified that the cooperative approach allows for a more efficient and wider articulation of pathologies. In the essay this suggestion by Honneth of a collective articulation of pathologies is given as one concrete way to set the conditions in which pupils could participate more fully in the democratic public sphere. Or in other words participation itself is the method in which citizenship in the public sphere is guaranteed.

In an even earlier interview with Anders Petersen and Rasmus Willig, Honneth already emphasized the cooperative approach as a consciousness raising empirical technique in sociological research. He stresses the employment of the moral grammar of recognition as a means for articulating individual and collective experiences of disrespect in the family, in the workplace and politics. According to Honneth:

By using the framework of recognition, for example, as incentive for group discussions, or in phrasing questions in a qualitative interview by using that moral language, it has the effect of raising the consciousness of people about that whole dimension, which is very often simply repressed or neglected. In that sense it has a consciousness-raising effect which has mainly to do with a simple social fact, namely that there is a certain tendency

in our society institutionally to ignore the whole spectrum of moral experiences, which are somewhat neglected or even repressed in the public language. I think, in raising questions and stimulating answers by thematic incentives using that moral language, we can, indirectly, make people aware of a whole hidden sphere of moral reality and of moral experiences which we are not aware of in everyday life because there is no public language of those moral experiences. The public language as such is highly demoralized, and empirical research using a certain moral vocabulary encourages the recovery of the specific language necessary for articulating moral experiences. In that sense it has a certain effect.⁹⁰

Group discussions guided by questions that enable the experiences of disrespect to surface out may also be coupled with biographical accounts. The use of biographical narratives as a way to articulate pathologies is a fruitful course taken by a number of researchers like Fredrik Sandberg and Chris Kubiak⁹¹ in the area of “experienced based learning” in the workplace, home, community and education; Ted Fleming⁹² on adult education; and Rauno Huttunen and Hannu L.T. Heikkinen⁹³ on teachers’ profession. The employment of the moral grammar of recognition has also been attached to the experience of empowerment in the personal, the interpersonal or collective and the political or social by Manuel Gonçalves Barbosa and Angel Garcia del Dujo⁹⁴ in the promotion of citizenship rights.

⁹⁰ Petersen and Willig, “An Interview with Axel Honneth The Role of Sociology in the Theory of Recognition,” 269.

⁹¹ Sandberg and Kubiak, “Recognition of Prior Learning, Self-realisation and Identity within Axel Honneth’s Theory of Recognition.”

⁹² Fleming, “Reclaiming the Emancipatory Potential of Adult Education: Honneth’s Critical theory and the Struggle for Recognition.”

⁹³ Huttunen and Heikkinen “Teaching and the Dialectic of Recognition.”

⁹⁴ Barbosa and Del Dujo’s “Education and Struggles for Recognition: the Strategic Role of Empowerment.”

Another practice that Honneth employs in his research and works is the employment of literary works, specifically novels, in his description and diagnoses of social reality as it also contains a consciousness raising effect when it make use of the moral vocabulary.⁹⁵ Novels or artworks in the broad sense are “phenomenological testimonies of certain structures of everyday life.”⁹⁶ Novels, Honneth relates, provide empirical basis for his writing which he can’t get from sociology when the research is too quantitative and not sensitive enough to the nuances in everyday life.⁹⁷ Appropriating this to critical pedagogy, this would be an instance of an “interdisciplinaryization” of teaching and research. This allows for a widening of horizons of understanding social reality and of identifying, articulating and examining pathologies that need to be addressed.

In the practice of sociology, Honneth admonishes that it need not be constrained to a single or fixed method such as group discussions or interviews instead, it should “find *clever ways* of combining existing methods (italics mine).”⁹⁸ Carried over to critical pedagogy once more, this means no less than an invitation to be creative enough in the craft of teaching and research with normative content. Following this thread, R.T. Pada’s Reconstructive Normative Simulation (RNS) can most potently be employed in critical pedagogy on top of his hopes for its future applications in the empirical sciences, political philosophy and literature. RNS is a creative translation of actual experiences of disrespect and social pathologies into a fictitious narrative that shows the intertwined relation of the three spheres of recognition. Pada describes it as a “thought experiment” in articulating deficits in normative resources and tracing how one may cope with it. “By merging these sets

⁹⁵ Petersen and Willig, “An Interview with Axel Honneth The Role of Sociology in the Theory of Recognition,” 270.

⁹⁶ Marcelo, “Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth,” 215.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Petersen and Willig, “An Interview with Axel Honneth The Role of Sociology in the Theory of Recognition,” 268.

of spheres, we can demonstrate the necessity of cooperation within the spheres and, at the same time, provide adequate theoretical perspective in understanding the normative claims of individuals through recognition."⁹⁹ Pada cautions however not to reduce the function of RNS into an evaluative tool for social pathologies due to its tendency to be a rigid and objectifying normative criteria. As a narrative, especially as a fictitious one, it could only reveal certain facets of a more complex actual experience. But the consciousness-raising articulation of struggles and the diagnostic potential of RNS is a promising path in identifying solutions and harnessing the energy for collective praxis. A method that through creative appropriation into teaching and research is very much in consonance with the aforementioned critical pedagogy.

In line with Honneth's description of renewed socialism as a global project within multiculturalist geographical settings, another pathway that is consistent and fulfills the criteria of critical pedagogy is the combined approach of the utility of native languages and the critical engagement with immanent issues on the various spheres of freedom within the immediate local social reality. By empowering and harnessing the semantic capacity of native languages to voice out the collective experience of disrespect and oppression, it could spark a collective praxis for social change which is sensitive to its culturally unique resources. It must be noted however that the use of native languages is not a new initiative and is already at work in academic institutions. The engagement of studies with concrete social issues has also been showcased many times in different works.

In his "The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy,"¹⁰⁰ Pada cited the weakness of trying to construct a single encompassing identity for a Filipino philosophy in view of the diversified and uniquely situated cultures in the

⁹⁹ Pada, *Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy of Recognition: Freedom, Normativity, and Identity*, 192.

¹⁰⁰ Roland Theuas Pada, "The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy" in *Kritike* 8:1 (June 2014) 24-44.

Philippines. He also pointed out the deficit of some pioneers in the field for a more empirical immersion and engagements with the uniquely situated concrete social issues. Then, he mentions Feorillo Demeterio and Florentino Hornedo to be exemplars of the kind of a critical Filipino philosophy that satisfy its requirements. Hornedo is a seasoned multidisciplinary researcher whose works encompass the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, literature and anthropology. He is also recognized in his contributions to diverse discussions on concrete social, cultural and political issues from his own native Ilokano roots and beyond. Demeterio on the other hand has performed the extra mile in writing academic and scholarly works in Filipino either on theoretical expositions or thematic discussion on certain issues. But it should be recognized however that other authors have exhibited similar ingredients of this aforementioned critical pedagogy though not necessarily using the perspective laid out herein from Honneth: Franz Guissepe Cortez for example appraises the critical dimension of Roque Ferriols' works in the light of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, Ferriols' "linguistic turn" to Filipino in philosophizing, he says, may be interpreted as a "political act" in the sense of critique and problematization of colonial discourse and elitist mentality¹⁰¹; Ranilo Hermida's analysis of Philippine democracy via Habermas critical theory exemplifies a thematization of a specific institution of social freedom;¹⁰² Agustin Rodriguez's engagement with socio-political realities as well as the enunciation of discourse in Filipino language is exemplary in his two works¹⁰³; Similar characteristics could also be traced

¹⁰¹ Franz Giuseppe F. Cortez, "The Linguistic turn as a Political Act: another Look at the thoughts of Roque Ferriols" in *Kritike* 8:1 (June 2014), 45-47.

¹⁰² Ranilo Balaguer Hermida, *Imagining Modern Democracy A Habermasian Assesment of the Philippine Experiment*, (Albany: State University of New York, 2014).

¹⁰³ See his *Governing the Other: Exploring the discourse of Democracy in a Multiverse of Reason* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009) and *May Laro ang Diskurso ng Katarungan* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 2014).

from the initiatives of Wilmer Joseph Tria¹⁰⁴ who is the first to use a Bikol language in doing and teaching philosophy and Adrian Remodo¹⁰⁵ who did a socio-political critique of oligarchic politics signified in the Bikol language; Jeffrey Oca's research on the philosophy of work of a local community in Negros Occidental and his critical appraisal of it as a form of resistance from the destructive tendency of globalization and at the same time as an alternative to social development is obviously an example of recognition of silent voices in the margins¹⁰⁶; to end this partial list is Renante Pilapil's eloquent articulation and critical analysis of the Moro struggle in Mindanao through the recent discourses on the theory of recognition.¹⁰⁷

Yet, although critical pedagogy has been normatively located in the finality of democratic education, Honneth acknowledges that it still does not have a clear-eyed view of what the content of education would be in the face of multiculturalism wherein the struggle for recognition perpetually occurs. Hence experimentalism remains another pathway that should be attributed to critical pedagogy rather than just thinking of education as something that can be carried out only on well-defined fixed and standardized approaches.

Conclusion

¹⁰⁴ Wilmer Joseph S. Tria, *Ako asin an Kapwa Ko Sarong Pilosopiya nin Tawo* (Naga: Ateneo de Naga University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ Adrian V. Remodo, "Sadiring-Tawo: From Familial to Oligarchic Politics" in *Bikol Studies: Perspectives and Advocacies* 1:1 (2014), 5-25.

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey Oca, "Philosophy at the Margins: Exploring the Philosophy of Work in the elderly People in some remote Areas of Negros occidental" in *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy* 1:1 (October 2015), 1-18.

¹⁰⁷ Renante Pilapil, *Recognition: Examining Identity Struggles*.

This paper has shown that Honneth's critical theory and his view of education could be arranged into a "critical pedagogy with normative content." In this manner, Honneth's claims in his theory of recognition are harmonized with his latter philosophical views on social freedom. The moral-practical dimension of education was articulated in its being situated within the ontological base of recognition. Then, the notion of social freedom and its consummation in his renewal of socialism was then established as the normative goal of pedagogy dubbed as critical with its three-fold characteristics of consciousness-raising articulation of struggles, diagnostic-therapeutic critique and freedom oriented praxis. Honneth's suggestion of the re-coupling of pedagogy and democracy directly reinforces that education must be reoriented to the ideal of a democratic ethical life and renewed socialism. While Honneth has not yet elaborated on the details how a critical pedagogy could be carried out through democratic education, practical ways were traced and surveyed how to carry out its normative goals based on Honneth's own testimonies and practices, as well as from other current practices of social critique that resemble the emancipative project of critical pedagogy though not explicitly utilizing Honneth's framework. These "pathways" are not taken as final and exhaustive for as Honneth himself states, democratic education within multiculturalists setting is still a work in progress. Perhaps the next task to do, as part of the mentioned method of "experimentalism" is the cooperative undertaking of applying those general pathways of critical pedagogy within the unique and diverse environments of different educational institutions. But this would be a problem for another paper to tackle.

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