

Recognition—German Idealism as an Ongoing Challenge

Edited By

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CHAPTER TWO

HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF RECOGNITION—WHAT IS IT?

Heikki Ikäheimo

Much has been written during the last 20 years or so about “recognition”, and some of the best minds in contemporary philosophy have made it a central term in their own theoretical projects. But is it justified to talk of a “new paradigm” centred around the idea of recognition, in social and political philosophy, or perhaps even more broadly? This of course depends on what one expects from a paradigm. If one expects a family of shared basic intuitions and approaches to an overlapping or interconnected set of themes and problems, then probably yes. If one expects conceptual unity, or at least an organized and well-documented debate about and contestation of the basic concepts of the suggested paradigm, a fair amount of work still remains to be done.

Part of the problem with the latter issues maybe the consoling sense of unity that a common reference point in Hegel gives: in referring to Hegel one easily creates the rhetorical effect that one is talking about more or less the same thing as others referring to Hegel are. Yet, Hegel never defined ‘recognition’ (*Anerkennung*) and as any teacher of a course on the topic knows it is not particularly easy to come up with a concise answer to what exactly Hegel meant by it.¹

In what follows, I will try to provide some illumination on this question by means of an analysis of one important text by Hegel in which whatever it is that Hegel means by ‘recognition’ (*Anerkennung*) plays a central role. I will show that even in this relatively short and concise text what ‘recognition’ means is a rather complicated matter, or in other words that in using the term in this text Hegel had in mind several issues which, though they are related, are by no means reducible to just one thing. Eventually, what I hope to achieve in this article is to sort out at least some of the different

¹ Robert Williams (1997, 1) suggests that recognition is not a “thematic” concept in Hegel which he would explicate anywhere, but rather an “operative” concept by means of which Hegel explicates other concepts. But even this may be too optimistic, as it still makes it sound as if there is one concept that the term ‘recognition’ (*Anerkennung*) refers to in Hegel. Whether there is, is something I wish to clarify in this article.

issues at stake, with the hope that this will turn out useful *both* for figuring out what really is going on in Hegel's text *and* for trying to speak in a more consciously differentiated manner about the plurality of phenomena that may be at issue when we talk about 'recognition' today. It is only with adequate consciousness of the variety of phenomena at stake that we can inquire into their connections and thus work our way towards a conceptual unification of recognition-theory as a paradigm.

1. *Recognition in Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*

The text that I have in mind is the chapter 'Self-consciousness' in Hegel's Berlin *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Subjective Spirit. Why choose this text rather than the much more famous Self-consciousness chapter in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*? If one is to choose between these two texts in particular for the purpose of reconstructing what recognition in Hegel's view does and what it is, there are several reasons to favour the *Encyclopaedia* version.

First of all, the *Encyclopaedia* is free from a certain complication that very easily leads astray readings of the *Phenomenology*. This is the fact that in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* it is often difficult to determine whether something that Hegel writes is meant as a neutral description of the relevant phenomena themselves, or rather serves the very particular goal and the very particular method of the book as an introduction to his philosophical system. In contrast, such complications are absent in the *Encyclopaedia* which is not an introduction to the system, but simply the system itself.

Another significant difference is that whereas the paragraphs explicitly discussing recognition in *Phenomenology of Spirit* end with a description of the unequal relationship of the master and the bondsman—a fact that has led numerous readers and authors thinking that Hegel's concept of recognition is somehow essentially about domination—the *Encyclopaedia*-version also describes (albeit very briefly) a state of reciprocal recognition in which domination by one party has been overcome. For sure, it is nowadays widely acknowledged that the story of recognition in *Phenomenology of Spirit* continues far beyond the chapter explicitly dedicated to it.² But the fact still remains that if one is to focus just on the chapter on

² See, for example, Canivez 2011.

Self-consciousness—which at least for pedagogical purposes often makes good sense—the *Encyclopaedia*-version presents the whole story, whereas the *Phenomenology of Spirit*-version does not.³

A third advantage of the *Encyclopaedia*-version is that it is situated in Hegel's mature philosophical system which presents his thinking in its most elaborated and worked through form, and includes important elements that are completely missing in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, yet are important for understanding the full significance of recognition for Hegel. Most importantly, these include the Philosophy of Nature with its concluding discussion of the animal life-form, and the section on Anthropology in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (both of which in the *Encyclopaedia* precede the discussion on recognition), as well as the whole of Philosophy of Objective Spirit which is thematically closely connected to Subjective Spirit.

But didn't recognition lose much or most of its earlier importance for Hegel in the *Encyclopaedia*, and isn't it therefore pointless to focus on any part of that text in discussing "Hegel's concept of recognition"? As widely spread as this view once was, as far as I can see it was never based on very convincing scholarship, and it has been largely refuted by now.⁴ What I will say in this paper will hopefully also contribute a little more to its refutation.

All in all, there are several good reasons to focus on the Self-consciousness-chapter of the *Encyclopaedia* in particular as a first point of contact with "Hegel's concept of recognition".

2. *Spirit, Freedom and Recognition*

To get started with the theme of recognition in the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (or in the Philosophy of Spirit in general) one needs to grasp its connections to the concepts or themes of *spirit* and *freedom*. In the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel famously characterizes

³ Another nowadays well-known fact about the chapter in *Phenomenology of Spirit* in question is that Hegel does in fact first presents in it the structure of mutual recognition, though on a very abstract conceptual level (Hegel 1975, §§ 179–184), after which he then goes on to illustrate the dialectic of recognition with the story of the lord and bondsman which is an account of one-sided and thus not yet fully unfolded recognition. Hence on a certain abstract level also the chapter in *Phenomenology of Spirit* does of course also present "the whole story".

⁴ See Williams 1997, Ikäheimo 2004, Honneth 2010.

'spirit' as the "I that is we, and the we that is I", or as "the unity of opposite self-consciousnesses".⁵ The unity of opposite self-consciousnesses is basically the state or structure of mutual recognition, and thus we can say that in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, or at least at this point in the book, Hegel presents the structure of mutual recognition as the basic structure of spirit—whatever that means more exactly. Is something like this true of recognition and spirit in the Berlin *Encyclopaedia* as well? Yes and no. "No" in the sense that in the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit recognition is a subordinated principle, or a concrete instantiation of more general principles, and thus saying that the structure of mutual recognition is *the* basic structure of spirit in the *Encyclopaedia* would be somewhat misleading. But "yes" in the sense that recognition, at least in some of its modifications, is in the *Encyclopaedia* a necessary constitutive element of "spirit", or in other words of a life-form that is not merely natural or animal, but a form of life of rational beings or persons. And "yes" also in the sense that mutual recognition is something whereby the more general principles are or can be realized to the maximum degree. Which principles do I mean? Let us take a brief look at how Hegel characterizes the concept of spirit in the *Encyclopaedia*.

In the published version of the *Encyclopaedia*, at the beginning of Philosophy of Spirit (the final 1830 edition) Hegel discusses the "concept of spirit" and says that the "essence of spirit is [...] freedom [...] [or] absolute negativity".⁶ In the 1827/8-lectures on Philosophy of (Subjective) Spirit Hegel explains this at some length: "the human being is natural, [yet] [...] not [...] merely natural, but also [...] spiritual".⁷ Further, "[we] ourselves" "are spirit", meaning that though we humans are *both* natural *and* spiritual (or both animals and persons), spirituality (or personhood) is our *essence*. Since our essence is spirit and spirit's essence is freedom, our essence is thus to be free and this is also our "vocation (*Bestimmung*)".⁸ By calling freedom our vocation Hegel is saying that it is something that we *both* have an inbuilt tendency or drive (*Trieb*)⁹ to realize *and* that it is our task to realize.¹⁰

⁵ Hegel 1975, § 177.

⁶ E3, § 382.

⁷ EW, 3.

⁸ EW, 6–7.

⁹ 'Drive' (*Trieb*) is Hegel's general term for the teleological urge of the human life-form. He talks of the drive of spirit to cognize objectivity (HPSS, § 416 Addition), the drive of self-consciousness to actualise what it is implicitly (*ibid.*, § 425), the drive to knowledge (*ibid.*, § 443 Add.), the drive to the good and the true (Hegel, 1991, § 225), and so on.

¹⁰ EW, 4–5.

As in the published version, also in the lectures Hegel identifies freedom, as the essence of spirit and thus as our essence, with “absolute negation” or “negation of negation”.¹¹ He explains that freedom in the sense in question is not abstract or formal freedom which is the (impossibility of) freedom from determination by otherness, but rather what he calls “concrete freedom”,¹² or in other words being “at home with oneself” in “what limits one”.¹³ Concrete freedom has the structure of absolute negation or negation of negation, or as Hegel also says “double negation”,¹⁴ where being limited or determined by some otherness is the first negation, and overcoming the externality, alienness or hostility of that by which one is limited or determined is the second negation completing absolute negation, and thus bringing about concrete freedom with regard to the otherness in question.

The first one of the principles that I mentioned is exactly this *principle of absolute negation* or of *concrete freedom*, or, which is the same, the principle of *being with oneself in otherness*. This principle appears prominently in Hegel's Logic, especially at the beginning of the Logic of Concept, as well as in his Philosophy of nature in which the more a natural phenomenon instantiates the principle the ‘free’er it is. Animal life, as the highest point of nature, exhibits *internal* “concrete freedom” in that an animal's every organ affects or determines its every other organ (the first negation), yet in such a way that they all contribute to making possible each other's existence and functioning (the second negation). An animal also exhibits some, though very minimal, degree of concrete freedom with regard to the *external* world, in that it can treat parts of it as its own environment (*Umwelt*) whereby it maintains its life.¹⁵

However, whereas nature can realize the principle of absolute negation or concrete freedom only to a very limited degree, the realm of spirit or the human realm realizes it maximally. The reason for this is that humans are conscious beings, equipped with *Bewusstsein*. In humans as conscious beings the principle of absolute negation or “being with oneself in otherness” takes the more concrete form of “conscious-being [bewusst-Sein]

¹¹ EW, 140.

¹² EW, 14.

¹³ “Concrete freedom means that in whatever determines, limits or negates me, I nevertheless remain at home with myself, and annihilate the other[ness].—Freedom constitutes the essential determination of spirit, and we can say that freedom is the concept of spirit.” (EW, 14)

¹⁴ Hegel 2010, 531.

¹⁵ E2, §§ 350–366.

with oneself in otherness” or “consciousness of oneself in otherness”. *Conscious-being with, or consciousness of, oneself in otherness* is the second one of the principles that I mentioned. It is by being *conscious* of themselves in otherness that humans are spiritual beings and thus concretely free to a much larger extent than any merely natural beings are. (It should be added that since humans are animals too, the more limited ways in which animals instantiate concrete freedom partly also apply to humans.)

The principle of “conscious-being with, or consciousness of, oneself in otherness” has various ways of realization. On the most general level, there are theoretical (or epistemic) and practical ways or aspects of its realization. All epistemic activities involve, first, conceiving something as an external object and thus being determined, as a subject, by it. This is the first negation. Secondly, they involve, when successful, gaining knowledge or understanding of what is posited as object, and thus overcoming its foreignness. This is the second negation. In cognizing or understanding structures of reality (whether natural or spiritual) by means of concepts with which we can also operate in thought, we are able to “find ourselves”—or in other words our own thoughts or structures of thinking—in reality, be thereby concretely free in relation to reality, and thus feel at home in the world.

Practical activities can similarly be ways of domesticating the world, by being ways of externalizing ourselves, our interests and thoughts in reality, and thereby making the world whereby we are necessarily determined a home that reflects ourselves or enables us to be “conscious of or ourselves” in it. It is by means of such practical activities that we leave *external* nature or a merely animal environment (partly) behind, and start (partly) dwelling in a world of ‘objective spirit’ of our own making. (I say “partly” because humans are also animals and thus can never leave nature completely behind.) Almost needless to say, the epistemic and practical dimensions of spirit’s, i.e. humanity’s coming to know itself in reality, or making it a place in which humans can be or feel “at home” are in Hegel’s thinking in many ways interrelated.

Among all the ways in which humans can be conscious of or “find” themselves in otherness and thus be concretely free with what determines them, on Hegel’s account there is something very special about the way in which they can find themselves *in one another*. Importantly, this particular instantiation of the second principle is closely connected to how humans leave their *internal* nature or merely animal subjectivity (again partly) behind by developing embodied psychological structures that make them beings with “subjective spirit”. In contemporary philosophical

language we can say that on Hegel's account finding ourselves in each other is closely connected to how we become and are psychological persons. What I am talking about now is the *structure or principle of (mutual) recognition*, which is the third and last one of the principles I mentioned. But what exactly is recognition according to the passage dedicated to the theme in the *Encyclopaedia*—the Self-consciousness chapter?

3. *Recognition—Preliminary Distinctions*

To start clarifying things, let me first thematize six distinctions that are necessary for any attempt to answer the question just posed in a detailed way.¹⁶ These distinctions (except the sixth one) apply to discourses on recognition in general, but in this paper I will only apply them to a closer analysis of what is going on in the Self-consciousness chapter.

(1) First, there is the distinction between *vertical* and *horizontal* forms of recognition, familiar already from Ludwig Siep's *Anerkennung als Prinzip der praktischen Philosophie*.¹⁷ 'Horizontal recognition' refers to recognition between individuals (and in principle groups) and it is what the expression 'mutual recognition' primarily refers to. 'Vertical recognition', on the other hand, at least as it applies to the text in question, refers to recognition between individuals on the one hand and social institutions or an authority upholding them on the other hand (whether this authority is a tyrant, a separate ruling class, or the community of individuals as a whole).

(2) Secondly, 'horizontal' recognition comes in two importantly different variants which I will call *purely intersubjective recognition* and *institutionally mediated (horizontal) recognition* respectively. Institutionally mediated recognition is recognition of a subject as a bearer of institutional roles made up of rights and duties (or 'deontic powers'). In contrast, purely intersubjective recognition is recognition of a subject which abstracts from or bares no internal or conceptual relation to his or her institutional roles, relating to the recognizee simply as a bearer of a certain kind of

¹⁶ A word of caution: distinguishing these various issues does not mean that they are unrelated or merely externally related. One is only able to understand how they are related by first distinguishing them. There is no proper synthesis without a proper analysis (and the other way around).

¹⁷ Siep 1979.

psychological constitution. To keep these two phenomena that are easily confused with each other distinct, I will mark the institutionally mediated form of horizontal recognition with an asterisk ('recognition*').

(3) Thirdly, and closely related to the previous two distinctions, we need to distinguish between, on the one hand, social norms and *norm-systems that are not institutionalized*, and, on the other hand, *institutionalized norm-systems or institutions proper*. Whereas one can at least imagine non-institutional norms and systems of norms emerging in the interaction of an intersubjective dyad and upheld and administered by its members alone, institutions proper are norms-systems that are relatively independent of any single subject or intersubjective pair of subjects. In other words, institutions proper form a relatively independent 'third instance' authorized and administered not only (and in the extreme case only very minimally) by this or that particular individual or intersubjective dyad whose life they govern, but also (and in the extreme case almost exclusively) by some third person or persons.¹⁸

The concept of vertical recognition mentioned above applies only (or at least paradigmatically) when there is a 'third' relatively independent instance of social institutions and an authority upholding them. Similarly, the concept of institutionally mediated horizontal recognition of individuals as bearers of institutional roles applies only (or at least paradigmatically) when institutions and thus institutional roles are at place.

(4.) Fourthly, what I have just called recognition in the purely intersubjective sense has *two dimensions*: a *deontological* and an *axiological* one. In short, whereas the deontological dimension of purely intersubjective recognition concerns issues such as norms, authority, obedience and respect, the axiological dimension concerns issues such as values, concern, care and love.

(5.) Fifthly, both the purely intersubjective and the institutionally mediated forms of horizontal recognition have, on the one hand, modes that are in a certain sense not genuinely *interpersonal* or *personifying*, and, on the other hand, modes that are *interpersonal* or *personifying*. The non-interpersonal mode of institutionally mediated horizontal recognition is recognizing someone as a bearer of an institutional role or status that is not that of a person (but, say, of a slave), whereas the interpersonal

¹⁸ For example Robert Brandom's talk in Brandom 2009, p. 70 of "reciprocal recognition" "instituting" "normative statuses" seems ambivalent between the purely intersubjective and the genuinely institutional norms.

mode of recognition in this sense is recognizing someone as a bearer of the 'institutional status of a person', or of 'person-making' deontic powers such as the right to life or ownership of oneself.

The not-personifying or not genuinely interpersonal mode of purely intersubjective horizontal recognition is recognizing someone in a way that does not quite attribute her the intersubjective significance of a person in the recognizer's eyes (but, say, that of someone useful for one's own purposes), whereas intersubjective recognition in the genuinely interpersonal or personifying sense involves precisely seeing the other in light of what we can call 'person-making intersubjective significance'.¹⁹

(6.) There is one more distinction to make, a distinction that does not directly concern the meaning of the term 'recognition', but rather the very special architectonics or thematic structure of the text in question. Namely, the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (and broadly speaking the *Realphilosophien* as a whole) can, in principle, be read from two complementary perspectives or "directions". From what we can call the *bottom-up-perspective*, the consecutive sub-chapters of the text describe consecutive stages in a developmental process so that real living entities can realize or instantiate a particular stage without realizing or instantiating the later more developed ones. In contrast, from the *top-down-perspective* the consecutive sub-chapters each describe internally connected moments of the fully developed or cultivated whole which is the fully 'spiritual' or free human person. Hegel himself seems to have had both directions or perspectives in mind in writing the text. This has consequences not only but also for attempts to reconstruct the theme of recognition in it.

4. *The Self-consciousness Chapter—A Brief Introduction*

Before analyzing the Self-consciousness chapter with the help of these distinctions, let me first briefly and with broad strokes outline the structure and main events of the chapter. I will do this only from the bottom-up-perspective, understanding each sub-chapter discussing a distinct developmental stage or sequence. This 'direction' of reading fits the illustrative

¹⁹ Though they are in many ways (partly internally) related, being a person in institutional status, being a person in intersubjective significance, and being a psychological person are three different issues. For some of the details, Ikäheimo 2007.

story of the master and slave or bondsman better and allows hence a more text-immanent reading of the text as it stands.²⁰

4.1 *The Primitive Subject of 'Desire'*

The chapter consists of a short introduction (§§ 424–425), and three sub-chapters: 'Desire' (*Die Begierde*) (§§ 426–429), 'Recognitive self-consciousness' (*Das anerkennende Selbstbewusstsein*) (§§ 430–435), and 'General self-consciousness' (*Das Allgemeine Selbstbewusstsein*). In the first sub-chapter 'Desire' Hegel describes a primitive mode of practical intentionality or object-relation solely determined by the subject's immediately given and felt physiological needs and by the desire for whatever objects its instincts point out as promising immediate satisfaction. Objects thus appear for the desiring subject solely in light of significances determined by its immediate needs and instincts (i.e. as something like 'desirable', 'avoidable' and so forth).²¹ Although the subject experiences the objects of its desire as distinct from its own body, their significance for the subject is in this sense thoroughly determined by the its own nature—something that Hegel expresses by saying that as independent objects they are determined as "a nullity" (*ein Nichtiges*).²² In terms of the principle of consciousness of oneself in otherness, desire hence instantiates consciousness of oneself in the object (the second negation or moment of "unity"), yet it does *not* instantiate a fully unfolded sense of otherness of the object (the first negation or moment of "difference").²³ One could say, to caricature a bit, that the subject is hence conscious *only* of itself in the object.

4.2 *Cultivation Through a "Process of Recognition"*

The transition to the next sub-chapter 'Recognitive self-consciousness' takes place by the introduction of a new object, namely another subject that resists its reduction to the significances in light of which the

²⁰ One should keep in mind that the master and slave or bondsman are only illustration, yet they are so central to the text that completely abstracting from them is not possible for an interpretation that tries to make sense what Hegel actually writes in the text.

²¹ Robert Brandom (2011) calls these "erotic significances", Robert Pippin (2011) "erotic significances".

²² E3, § 426.

²³ In Hegel's highly unconventional terminology one can also say that desire instantiates too much self-consciousness and not enough consciousness. One textual question that I cannot discuss here is the connection of Hegel's description of 'desire' in the Self-consciousness-chapter to his description of the animal world-relation in his Philosophy of Nature. See Ikäheimo 2011.

primitive desiring subject sees the world. Hegel writes that whereas the object of desire is “without a self” and therefore “can offer no resistance”²⁴ to its reduction in the subject’s perspective to significances determined by immediate needs, the other subject is a “free object”²⁵ that does resist such reduction. Hegel is hence suggesting that the other subject is, in a way, the paradigmatic object that first reveals the world for the first subject as genuinely independent of it.

It is in this sub-chapter that we meet the famous figures of the ‘master’ and ‘bondsman’ or ‘slave’ (Hegel uses both terms). For both subjects the other subject is a problem exactly because of its resistance to being seen and related to in light of significances determined by one’s immediate needs. Whereas the intentional relation to objects of desire were characterized by unity without enough difference (or the second negation without the first), the encounter with the other subject is characterized by difference without enough unity (the first negation without the second). Neither subject can be conscious of itself in the other. The development or “process of recognition” described in this sub-chapter is basically a progress in the ways in and the extent to which subjects are able to relate to each other so that they are *both* genuinely independent with regard to each other *and* also conscious of themselves in the other in the more exact sense of *affirmed by the other’s intentionality*. The telos of this development is mutual consciousness of oneself in a free other, and thus a “concretely free” relationship.

The first and most primitive attempt to realize freedom with regard to the other subjects is however still very far from this telos: it is a mutual attempt to completely eliminate the otherness or unyieldingness of the other, and thus a “struggle” or “fight”.²⁶ To the extent that both really are unyielding, it is a struggle about “life and death” (*ibidem*). And yet, if a social relation is to ensue at all both subjects have to stay alive. The simplest solution to the problem in which both subjects stay alive and form a social relation is one subject yielding to the perspective or will of the other. The one who yields becomes thereby the slave or bondsman, making the unyielding other a master. The master is now conscious of itself affirmed by the obeying slave in that he is “recognized by the acquiescent slave”.²⁷ The slave, on the other hand, is at first not recognized by the

²⁴ E3, § 427.

²⁵ E3, § 429.

²⁶ E3, § 432.

²⁷ E3, § 433.

master and thus cannot be conscious of himself affirmed by the latter. As to the cultivation of subjectivities, the slave has left behind a mere desire-determined practical orientation already by preferring “preservation of its life” over immediate satisfaction of desire, whereas the master apparently won precisely because he was less worried about his life.

However, the master-slave-relationship cultivates also the subjectivity of the master, forcing him too to leave behind immediate desire-orientation. As Hegel puts it, “the means of mastery, the bondsman, has [...] to be kept alive”, and this creates a “community of need and concern for its satisfaction”. By having to care for the life of another subject, namely the bondsman, even the master cannot hold on to its/his immediate desire-orientation characterized by “crude destruction of the immediate object”. Instead, what now arises is, as Hegel puts it, “acquisition, conservation and formation” of objects, a “provision [*Vorsorge*] that takes the future into account and secures it”.²⁸ In only a few dense sentences Hegel describes the coming about of a wholly new practical orientation concerned not only for immediate satisfaction, but for life in general and thus future well-being; and not only of one’s own life, but also that of another. Clearly it is the slave who “acquires, conserves and forms”²⁹ objects, or in other words labours to concretely provide for the future of both his master and himself. Yet, also the master is *concerned for* the future well-being of both and thus develops a psychological constitution radically different from that of a primitive solipsistic desiring subject. As for the slave, labouring for the master has further cultivating effects on his subjectivity or psychological structure: the slave “works off the singularity of his will in the service of the master [...] and sublates the inner immediacy of desire”.³⁰ This is best understood as a description of the bondsman’s new future-oriented concern, one that sacrifices immediate satisfaction for future well-being, becoming habitualized as his “second nature”.³¹

²⁸ “Since the means of mastery, the servant, has also to be kept alive, one aspect of this relationship consists of need and concern for its satisfaction. Crude destruction of the immediate object is therefore replaced by the acquisition, conservation and formation of it, and the object is treated as the mediating factor within which the two extremes of independence and dependence unite themselves. The form of universality in the satisfying of need is a perpetuating means, a provision which takes the future into account and secures it.” (§ 434)

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ E3, § 435.

³¹ Hegel discusses habitualization as an important moment of subjective spirit, or psychological personhood, towards the end of Anthropology (E3, §§ 409–410).

All in all, whereas the story of the master and bondsman begins with a mutual attempt to completely annihilate the challenge of the other, it gradually develops into a situation in which both relate to the other as distinct from oneself, yet can be conscious of oneself in the other, or in other words affirmed by the other's consciousness or intentionality. The master can see the slave "recognizing" him or affirming his will in that the slave obeys him, and the slave can see the master, to some extent at least, "recognizing" him by affirming his interest for self-preservation and well-being by being concerned about it. (As we shall see below, there is in fact more to say about recognition between the master and bondsman.) Generally speaking this sub-chapter is hence simultaneously an illustration of development of concrete freedom in intersubjective relations, and of the cultivation of subjects from primitive animality to psychological personhood.

4.3 *The Concretely Free Relationship of Mutual Recognition*

Hegel names the state that is the end of the "process or recognition" "general self-consciousness". In the third and final sub-chapter of 'Self-consciousness' with this term as its title, Hegel briefly describes the state in question in terms of the concept of concrete freedom as knowing of oneself in an independent other, and presents, very briefly, some thoughts about its concrete realizations. He writes:

General self-consciousness is the affirmative knowing of one's self in the other self. Each self has absolute independence [...], but on account of the negation of its immediacy or desire does not differentiate itself from the other. Each [...] knows itself to be recognized by its free counterpart, and knows this insofar as it recognizes the other and knows it to be free.³²

Both (or all) subjects thus now "know" or are conscious of themselves in the other in the sense of being affirmed by the other's recognition. Both are for each other "absolutely independent", neither trying to subsume the other under one's egocentric perspective (the first negation or moment of difference); yet, somehow neither of them "differentiates" herself from the other (the second negation or moment of unity). Hegel says that this is so due to the "negation" or overcoming of "desire", but the "negation" in question must be understood not merely as the absence of the primitive orientation by immediate desire, but more positively as including the new

³² E3, § 436.

form of subjective orientation in which recognition of the other has a central role. The unity that Hegel talks about comes about precisely through recognition, which involves on the one hand adopting the other's concern for his own well-being as one's own concern (which is what Hegel explained the master doing), and on the other hand taking the other's will as authoritative on one (which is what Hegel explained the bondsman doing). It is through these 'recognitive' ways of relating to the other that the recognizer's perspective adopts and thus affirms elements of the recognizee's perspective, and when the recognizee is conscious of this, she "knows" herself "affirmatively" in the recognizer.

Hegel goes on to say that "general self-consciousness" as mutual knowing of oneself in a free other is the "substance" of what makes modes of social life such as "the family, the fatherland, the state" as well "virtues, love, friendship, valour, honor, fame" truly "spiritual".³³ This seems like a rather motley list of phenomena, and Hegel is clearly only making a very general statement according to which all of these are instantiations of "spirit" and thus concrete freedom in the sense of mutual knowing of oneself recognized by free others.³⁴ But why is it that one can only know oneself recognized by a free other "insofar as one recognizes the other"? The answer lies in the word "free": recognizing the other (my recognizer) is what makes her concretely free since it is what allows her be conscious of herself in me. Thus only a recognizer who is recognized by me is concretely free in her relationship to me.

5. *What is 'Recognition' in the Self-consciousness Chapter?*

How do the distinctions that I made in section 3 apply to the Self-consciousness chapter, and what do they tell us about the concept or concepts of recognition operative in this text?

1) Starting with the distinction between the *vertical* and *horizontal* senses of recognition, Hegel himself does not articulate this distinction at all, and there is in fact an amount of ambivalence in the text as to whether

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ In lecture notes from 1825 Hegel says "[t]he forms, which are those of feeling, inclination, benevolence, love, friendship do not concern us" (GK, 347). Hegel clearly speaks here in a rather high level of conceptual abstraction, focusing only on the structure of concrete freedom as knowing oneself in a free other which he considers as the "substance" of all these more concrete phenomena.

the illustrative figures of the master and the slave or bondsman are to be read as being 'horizontally' or 'vertically' related. On the one hand, most of the text gives the impression that the master-bondsman-relationship is an illustration of a horizontal relationship between two individuals forming an intersubjective dyad. It is the primitive dyad of two desiring subjects encountering each other, and at the next step a struggle between two subjects on a more or less equal 'horizontal' footing, that at the beginning of the story leads to the relationship of *a* master and *a* slave or bondsman. Also, as I just indicated, Hegel conceives of the end of the development in the sub-chapter 'General self-consciousness' in what appears to be horizontal terms.

Yet, on the other hand, in § 433 as well as in the lectures Hegel in fact talks about the empirical beginning of states though domination and clearly interprets the figure of the master as a ruler, king or tyrant ruling and thus 'standing above' a plurality of other people. In the lectures he talks of the tyrant Pisistratus, who imposed the laws of Solon on the Athenians, and clearly associates the figure of the 'master' with Pisistratus and that of the 'slave' or 'bondsman' with the plurality of the Athenians.³⁵ What Hegel does not do at this point is to thematize the *horizontal* relations between individuals—or as he writes "the shared life of men" (*Zusammenleben der Menschen*, E3, § 433)—subjected to the law or authority, but the individuals are clearly to be thought of as *vertically* related to the "master" or tyrant, who is an external authority ruling but not ruled by them.³⁶ Put in another way, whereas Hegel mostly seems to be thinking of the master-bondsman-relation as a *dyadic* relationship not involving any 'third' element, in § 433 and here and there in the lectures he in fact operates with a *triadic* model that involves both horizontal relations between individuals and vertical relations between them on the one hand and a ruler or "master" on the other. Hegel simply leaves the details of the triadic model for the reader to think through.

It seems at first quite surprising that Hegel conceives of universal self-consciousness in horizontal terms only, leaving out any reference to vertical recognition even in mentioning "the state". What about vertical

³⁵ See E3, § 435Z.; EW, 173; GK, 345.

³⁶ E3, § 433: "It is through the appearance of this struggle for recognition and submission to a master that states have been initiated out of the social life of men." E3, § 435Z.: "After Solon had given the Athenians democratically free laws for example, Pisistratus necessarily assumed power by which he forced the Athenians to obey them. It was only when this obedience had taken root that the rule of the Pisistratids became superfluous."

recognition between the state and its citizens? This does not have to signal oversight on his part however for reasons that I will return to in discussing the next distinction.

2) Hegel's text is also ambiguous between *purely intersubjective* and the *institutionally mediated* senses of horizontal recognition. To understand the relationship described in 'Recognitive self-consciousness' as a purely intersubjective one is to understand the 'master' and the 'bondsmen' as intersubjective roles determined solely by the way in which the individuals in question regard each other: I regard you as my master and myself as your bondsman, you regard me as your bondsman and yourself as my master, and this alone is what makes you the master and me the bondsman. Recognition or lack of it *in the purely intersubjective sense* is here the essential element in the ways in which we regard each other, and thereby *constitutive of* mastery or bondage as relational or intersubjective roles.

In contrast, to understand the master-bondsman-relationship as an institutionally mediated (or 'institutional') relationship means that one understands the 'master' and the 'bondsmen' as roles, positions or statuses in an institutional system and thereby as relatively independent of the individuals in those positions and how they regard each other. For sure, they need to recognize* each other as bearers of their institutional or institutionally mediated statuses or positions, or as bearers of the deontic powers to go with them. Without such recognition* the institution of mastery and slavery would not be in power in their relationship. Yet, their recognition* alone is not enough for the institution to exist and thus for them to occupy the institutional roles in question.

Since much of what Hegel says in the Self-consciousness chapter implies a strictly horizontal or dyadic model that makes no reference to a 'third' institutional instance, it seems to a large extent right to reconstruct the text in the purely intersubjective register. What this means, however, is that one must understand the expressions 'master' and 'slave' or 'bondsmen' fairly metaphorically, since what we usually mean by them is not an isolated intersubjective dyad but individuals who occupy positions determined by the overall normative or institutional structure of their society. Slavery in a non-metaphorical sense in the real world is a social institution.

This ambivalence between the purely intersubjective and the institutional senses of horizontal recognition also applies to Hegel's short depiction of 'General self-consciousness' or the state of mutual recognition. One wonders what exactly Hegel had in mind with his rather haphazard list of phenomena for which "general self-consciousness" forms the "substance"

of what makes them “spiritual” and thus instantiations of concrete freedom. These were, to repeat, “the family, the native country, the state, but also [...] all virtues, [...] love, friendship, valour, honour, [and] fame”. It seems largely right to say that the roles or positions of at least friends or people who love each other are essentially intersubjective ones and that the relevant sense of recognition in these relationships is the intersubjective one.³⁷ In contrast, the roles and relationships that constitute the *state* of course also include institutional roles and relationships. Thus, if Hegel's point is, as it seems to be, to say that *horizontal* recognition is the substance of what makes the state a ‘spiritual’ or in other words concretely free community, it is difficult to believe that he would not also be thinking of *institutionally mediated* horizontal recognition, or in other words recognition between citizens *as* occupiers of the various social positions comprising of the ideal society or state articulated in his Philosophy of Objective Spirit.

There is however at least one candidate reason for why Hegel might want to emphasize *purely intersubjective* horizontal recognition especially. Namely, it is recognition in this sense that realizes the principle of self-consciousness in other subjects to the maximum degree in that it, as Hegel puts it, “unites humans internally” (E3, § 431Z). This is so because in purely intersubjective recognition the intentionality or subjective perspective of the recognizer adopts elements of the recognizee's intentionality or subjective perspective into itself and thus makes the recognizer partly see the world from the recognizer's perspective. This is not so with institutionally mediated recognition* where the recognizer* merely responds to the recognizee's* institutional status without necessarily responding in any particular way to how the recognizee* sees the world as an individual. I will return to this theme shortly, in discussing how the fifth distinction between the non-personifying and personifying modes of intersubjective and institutionally mediated horizontal recognition applies to the text. It is more exactly the *personifying* mode of purely intersubjective horizontal recognition that to the maximum degree unites humans internally (without thereby compromising their freedom).

All these considerations aside, it seems nevertheless unreasonable to assume that Hegel would not *also* have had in mind horizontal institutionally

³⁷ Though ‘lovers’ and ‘friends’ can also stand in institutional relations with each other, this is not what constitutes them as each other's lovers and friends. Rather it is their (relevant kind of) intersubjective recognition of each other that does.

mediated recognition* in thinking of “the state”. Even if purely intersubjective recognition might be the ideal instantiation of concrete freedom, rights and therefore mutual recognition* between citizens as rights-bearers are indeed an essential element of the state. Thinking of universal self-consciousness in terms of recognition* also provides an explanation for why Hegel can forfeit in this context an explicit mention of vertical recognition, even if vertical recognition between the citizens and the state clearly is essential to social life in a state. Namely, the citizens’ vertical ‘upwards’ recognition of the state hardly is anything else than their acknowledgement or acceptance of its laws and norms, and the institutions that these constitute, as valid or legitimate. And their acknowledgement or acceptance of these laws, norms and institutions commits them to recognizing* each other as bearers of the rights and duties that the laws and institutions of the state attribute to them (or in other words that they have due to the state’s vertical ‘downwards’ recognition of them). Thus, in talking *explicitly* about horizontal recognition* between citizens as bearers or rights and duties one is in fact *implicitly* also talking about vertical recognition of and by the state. This vertical recognition is present in the paragraph in ‘universal self-consciousness’ by implication.

(3) As to the third distinction between *non-institutional norms* and *institutionalized norms or institutions proper*, the problem with the text is that Hegel’s only explicit reference to norms anywhere in the Self-consciousness-chapter, as well as in the lectures, is in the context of the discussion of Solon, Pisistratus and the Athenians and thus refers to institutionalized norms or “laws” (*Gesetz*). Yet such norms do not fit the dyadic or purely intersubjective model (also) at work in Hegel’s text, as it simply does not and cannot involve any reference to an institutional ‘third’ instance. On the dyadic model one can only think of norms arising and administered by the subjects themselves forming the intersubjective dyad.

If one wants to reconstruct Hegel’s account of recognition in the lord-bondsman-story (solely or mainly) in the deontological register of norms, authority, and of recognition as either (purely intersubjective) attribution of authority on norms, or as (institutionally mediated) response to deontic statuses, it is important to be aware of this difference between the dyadic and triadic models and thus between an intersubjective and an institutional concept of social norms.

4) This brings us to the fourth distinction between what I have called the *axiological* and the *deontological* dimension of horizontal intersubjective recognition. On a rational reconstruction which is both sensitive to Hegel’s text and conceptually adequate for grasping the overall

phenomenon discussed in it, recognition seems to have two dimensions: on the one hand some sort of concern for the life or well-being of the other, and on the other hand taking the other as having or sharing authority with oneself on the norms whereby interaction and life in common is organized and regulated.

In 'Recognitive self-consciousness' Hegel first talks of the axiological dimension, emphasizing the master's need to "keep the bondsman alive", implying that the master has to develop a concern for the bondsman's well-being.³⁸ He talks of the deontological dimension in discussing the bondsman's service for and thus obedience of the master.³⁹ The impression that the text gives is hence that only the master has to develop recognition for the bondsman in the axiological register of concern for his well-being, whereas only the bondsman has to develop recognition for the master in the deontological register of acknowledgement of his authority. But in fact it is clear on reflection, on the one hand, that the bondsman too has to develop a concern for the master's well-being. After all, the bondsman's life and well-being largely depend on how well he is able to care for the master, satisfy the master's needs and secure his well-being.

On the other hand, it is easy to show that the master too has to develop recognition for the bondsman as having some authority in the relationship. How come? Because any norm or rule he that the master imposes on the bondsman requires that the bondsman applies it in concrete cases. Since no rule or norm can fully determine every possible concrete application and thus every case of following it, the bondsman has to use his own judgment in determining how to apply the given norm in concrete cases. If a norm says, for example, "prepare adequate food-stores for winter", what this requires and thus means *in concreto* depends on various circumstances and has to be determined skilfully as they arise.

There may even be instances where the slave must criticize the master. Hegel points to this in his lectures by emphasizing that commanding effectively requires that one commands reasonably, abstracting from anything preposterous and absurd.⁴⁰ In a case where the master's commands or rules are inconsistent or unrealizable, the slave is forced to make this

³⁸ E3, § 434.

³⁹ E3, § 435.

⁴⁰ GK, 343: "Whoever wants to command must do so reasonably, for only he who commands reasonably will be obeyed."

explicit on pain of not being able to execute them.⁴¹ Not making explicit the master's failure to command rationally and in this sense not criticizing him would not only make the slave vulnerable to punishment, but also leave the master's commands or rules without realization. Similarly, since the slave is better acquainted with what exactly promotes or corrodes his own well-being, if the master fails to have adequate concern for the slave, he is in principle criticisable by the slave by appeal to the master's own self-concern. All in all, if the master is to serve well his own self-interest as a master, he *must* in practice regard and treat the bondsman as having *some* (as it were technical) authority in the relationship. On a rational reconstruction of Hegel's idealized developmental account one can thus say that *both* the master *and* the bondsman develop in it some kind of recognition for the other *both* in the axiological sense of concern for the other's well-being, *and* in the deontological sense of regard for his authority.

Many contemporary readings tend to see recognition in Hegel predominantly, and sometimes exclusively, in deontological terms of norms, authority and respect, and underrate or simply leave out the axiological dimension of values, concern, care and love.⁴² As important as the deontological dimension is and as valuable as insights about it are, focusing on it alone is both a one-sided reading of Hegel's text and a one-sided view of recognition in general.

5) There is however still something important missing from a full comprehension of Hegel's treatment of the theme of recognition in the text. We can articulate this missing element in terms of the distinction between what I called the *non-interpersonal* or *non-personifying* and the genuinely *interpersonal* or *personifying* modes of horizontal—both intersubjective and institutionally mediated—recognition. More in line with Hegel's own terminology, we can formulate it as a distinction between not *fully* spiritual modes of horizontal recognition on the one hand, and fully spiritual modes on the other hand. Again, Hegel does not make this distinction explicit, nor is it commonly made in interpretations of him.

The standard way to look at the development taking place in the master-bondsman-relationship is to see it as a development from a one-sided or

⁴¹ Robert Brandom's idea of inferential commitments is very useful for thinking through in more detail what is involved here.

⁴² See for example Brandom 2009, chapters 1 and 2; Pinkard 2002, chapter 11. This is by no means to deny the great service that the Kant-inspired deontological readings by Brandom, Pinkard and others have done to the understanding of Hegel.

extremely unequal or asymmetric relation of recognition to a fully equal or symmetric one. But this, as it were merely structural way of conceiving the development ignores something of fundamental importance.

Let us reconsider what exactly recognition between the master and bondsman is as described so far, focusing first on recognition in the purely intersubjective sense. *What exactly* does it mean for the subservient slave or bondsman to recognize the master in the intersubjective sense, taking into account the two dimensions of horizontal recognition? On the deontological dimension, what seems to be at issue is the slave obeying the master's commands and thus the master as an authority of the rules or norms of the relationship *out of fear* for the master (which is basically fear for his own life).⁴³ The slave's deontological attitude of recognition towards the master is hence something like *fearful obedience*. On the axiological dimension, what is at issue is the slave being concerned for the master's life and well-being instrumentally, motivated by the slave's (non-instrumental) concern for his own life and well-being, dependent as these are on those of the master. The slave's axiological attitude of recognition towards the master is hence one of *instrumental concern* for his life or well-being. It is by virtue of the slave's recognition of the master in the senses of fearful obedience of him and instrumental concern for his well-being that the master can be conscious of himself, or in other words of his authority and well-being affirmed by the slave. And as we saw, the master must also develop an instrumental concern for the slave's well-being, as well as regard for the slave as having at least some (technical) authority in the relationship. It is by virtue of these attitudes by the master that also the slave can, to some minimal extent at least, be conscious of himself affirmed by the master.

In the text Hegel makes a transition to 'general self-consciousness' right after discussing the bondsman's fearful obedience of the master (in § 435).⁴⁴ This inevitably raises the question whether Hegel really thinks

⁴³ E3, § 435.

⁴⁴ In the 1825 lectures Hegel fills in a little more detail, making the transition seem less abrupt, and thus doing more justice to the processuality or gradual change that he clearly is after: "The instrument [i.e. the slave or servant] also serves the master willingly however, being implicitly free self-consciousness, and the servant's will therefore has to be made favourably inclined toward the master, who has to care for him as a living being, take care of him as an implicitly free will. By this means, the servant is brought into the community of providing, so that he also has a purpose, counts, is to be honoured, is a member of the family." (GK, 343) Though these are only student notes from Hegel's lecture and not always completely reliable, one can discern two important moments in a gradual development in this passage:

that the mutual intersubjective recognition between free beings that he discusses in the final chapter ‘General self-consciousness’ which should fully realize concrete freedom as consciousness of oneself in otherness (more exactly in the other subject) is simply mutual instrumental concern for and mutual reluctant attribution of some authority to the other, both motivated either out of fear or practical necessity. If all that happens in the “process of recognition” is that recognition becomes mutual or symmetric, then this seems to be the implication. It does look rather cynical or disappointing as a picture of a community of mutual recognition between free beings. On a closer look Hegel makes it however clear that this is *not* a correct construal of what mutual recognition that fully realizes concrete freedom actually is.

In § 436 of ‘General self-consciousness’ he says that in fact the “master who confronted the bondsman was not yet fully free, for he was not fully conscious of himself in the other”. This relates to a sentence in § 431Z: “freedom of one within the other unites humans inwardly, whereas need and necessity only brings them together externally”. I suggested above that what distinguishes purely intersubjective recognition from institutionally mediated horizontal recognition* is that only the former “unites humans inwardly”. However, this is in fact not yet fully true of the not genuinely personifying recognition between the master and the slave.

Hegel himself does not explain what exactly he means by saying that the master is or was not yet fully conscious of himself in the slave, but the point can be put as follows: when A cares about B’s life and well-being merely *instrumentally or conditionally*—out of “need and necessity” to borrow Hegel—she does not care about it in the way in which B himself cares about it if B is a psychological person, namely *intrinsically*. Persons, in contrast to mere animals, are concerned for their well-being

(1) The slave’s fearful obedience of the master turns into a less fearful prudential motivation to serve him, as the master turns from someone who motivates through immediate death-threats to someone who motivates, at least also, by positive incentives (the master promises to “take care of” the bondsman if he works for him). This is a transition from a “slave” (*Sklav*) to a “bondsman” or “servant” (*Knecht*).

(2) A relation of mutual instrumentalization turns into a relation involving also mutual non-instrumental concern, as well as honouring (*Ehre*). This is a transition of the “servant” into a “member of the family”. What comes to fore here is not only non-instrumental concern (or love), but also honour and mutual gratitude for contributions to the family as a “community of providing (*Gemeinschaft der Vorsorge*)”. (Thus also something like recognition or esteem for contributions, important in Axel Honneth’s work on recognition, is present in this passage.)

or lives in general, and importantly they are not concerned for it (at least only) instrumentally or for the sake of something else, but (at least also) intrinsically or 'for their own sake'. This means that if A cares about B's well-being only instrumentally, she is thereby not affirming it in a way that fully reflects its importance for B himself. Or to put this in another way, axiological recognition in the mode of instrumental concern for well-being does not attribute the recognizee or her life and well-being the same significance in light of which the recognizee himself relates to himself as a psychological person. Instrumental concern is not a fully *personifying*, or fully *interpersonal* mode of intersubjective recognition, as it does not fully respond to, or fully affirm, an essential element of the kind of practical self-relation constitutive of psychological personhood.

Something roughly analogical seems true on the deontological dimension: when A obeys B's will merely conditionally, out of fear or some other purely prudential reason ("need and necessity") his attitude towards B does not fully respond to, reflect, or affirm the way in which persons themselves grasp their own authoritativeness among other persons. When A obeys or recognizes B as having authority merely conditionally—in the sense that when the condition such as a threat of and fear for death ceases to be in place, B's authority in A's eyes simply vanishes, or in the sense of A taking B as having authority only for applying rules prescribed by A but not for questioning or changing those rules—she is thereby not responding to B fully seriously as someone with authority. To the extent that having authority on the norms or terms of interaction with others is also an essential element of what it is to be a person, recognition as obedience out of need, necessity or fear—or any other merely conditional forms of attribution of authority—is not a fully *personifying* or fully *interpersonal* mode of intersubjective recognition. It too does not fully respond to, or fully affirm, an essential element of the kind of practical self-conception constitutive of psychological personhood. Neither one of these not fully personifying modes of recognition allows the recognizee to be *fully* conscious of himself affirmed by the recognizer. Subjects hence remain in an important sense estranged from each other, or not genuinely or fully "inwardly" united.

What is it then to recognize someone in the horizontal and intersubjective sense in a fully 'personifying' or fully 'spiritual' mode which enables the recognizee to be fully conscious of herself in, or affirmed by, the recognizer? In short, on the axiological dimension it is to care about the other *in the same way* in which she cares about herself, namely intrinsically

or unconditionally—or “for her own sake”. Caring for the other in this sense is usually called *love*. Analogically, on the deontological dimension fully personifying intersubjective recognition is taking the other as having ‘unconditional’ authority on the norms or terms of one’s co-existence with her, and thus on oneself. Though Hegel does not use the term in this context, this phenomenon is usually called *respect*.⁴⁵ What is at issue is not merely attributing the other technical authority in the interpretation and execution of ends set by oneself, but taking her as someone who has an independent viewpoint on ends and commands authority on the norms and principles of co-existence independently of my view-point.

Unlike instrumental concern and conditional forms of attributing authority, love and respect do “unite humans internally”: in loving someone her well-being or perspective of hopes and fears partly determines what has positive or negative value for me independently of what value (if any) the same things or states of affairs would have for me would I not love the person in question. Analogically, in respecting someone her judgments of right and wrong have subjective or felt bindingness on me that does not derive from my own judgments on the same issues nor from my own prudential considerations or calculations. Her view on right and wrong partly determines what from my point of view actually seems or feels right or wrong.

This is not to say that in loving another my evaluative perspective is completely determined by what is good or bad for the one I love, or that in respecting another my own independent judgments have no force at all. Rather, it is to say that the other’s axiological and deontological perspective becomes *part of* my own perspective and thereby partly decenters it.⁴⁶ The loved or respected person can therefore be conscious of her perspective being genuinely affirmed by my recognition of her, and at the same

⁴⁵ A litmus-test of genuine respect in this sense is whether one could genuinely feel ashamed in front of the other, or in other words respond to her negative judgment of oneself with shame.

⁴⁶ Speaking of “parts” sounds like conceiving the phenomenon in terms of external relations and this is at least partly right: my independent judgements and the judgements of those I respect can be in harmony, but they can also be in conflict and this is a conflict within me. Such conflict is central in what drives moral learning, the calibration of moral judgment and cultivation of moral imagination, but it can also lead to an (at least temporarily) irreconcilable internal division or conflict within the subject. To put this in another way: integration is the ideal, but it is integration of partly independent elements or parts that can also remain unintegrated. For Hegel lack of inner integration is defining of psychological pathologies—some of which he discusses in the Anthropology-section of Philosophy of Subjective Spirit.

time also be conscious that my own perspective remains irreducibly independent of hers.⁴⁷ Hence, intersubjective recognition in the personifying mode realizes both moments of concrete freedom as absolute negation. It unites persons “internally”, and allows them to be “fully” conscious of themselves in each other without thereby compromising their independence. To be free in this purely intersubjective sense is to live among and thus to be limited or determined by other persons who have love and respect for one.

As to institutionally mediated horizontal recognition*, it now seems to have a somewhat more marginal role in comparison to purely intersubjective recognition, since it is not capable of uniting humans to the same extent internally, and therefore does not enable them to be as fully conscious of themselves in each other. It simply does not involve the same psychological intimacy to recognize* someone as a bearer of rights or other deontic powers, since it does not mediate one’s perspective through that of the other in the same intimate or “internal” way. Nevertheless, the distinction between non-personifying and personifying modes does apply also to institutionally mediated recognition*.

This difference between, on the one hand, recognizing someone as a bearer of deontic powers that does not make her a person in institutional status, and, on the other hand, recognizing someone as a bearer of deontic powers that does make her so is clear in the master-slave-story: it is a difference between someone who can be owned but not own (a slave who is not a person in the institutional sense) and someone who can own but not be owned (a master who is a person in the institutional sense). The distinction becomes centrally important if one wants to reconstruct the “process of recognition” in the Self-consciousness chapter in the institutional register, as an account of development of social institutions. Read in this way, ‘general self-consciousness’ consists of mutual recognition* or respect* between individuals as bearers of rights and other deontic powers that they have as persons in institutional status.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ This does not mean that subjects only remain independent insofar as the actual contents of their concerns and judgments remain separate. It rather means that the identity of these contents is never automatic since each subject is still formally a distinct “centre” of concerns and judgments. The “decentering” involved in recognition does not completely do away with the distinctness of subjects, or to the extent it does the relationship does not adequately instantiate the moment of difference which is as important an element of concrete freedom as the moment of unity is.

⁴⁸ See the end of my discussion of the second distinction.

6) As to the final distinction between *bottom-up* and *top-down* readings of Hegel's text, I have discussed the text only from the bottom-up-perspective from which it reads as a highly stylized developmental story of the coming about and cultivation of social and psychological structures that make humans full-fledged persons in each other's eyes and in themselves. The complementary top-down-reading in contrast understands 'desire', unequal and conditional recognition, and full-fledged personifying recognition all as elements or moments of the fully developed or ideal concrete whole that is the full "spirituality" of humanity, or in other words the life-form of human persons fully realizing its essence which is concrete freedom. The important point that a top-down-reading makes visible is that the less than fully cultivated structures of intentionality, psychological profiles, interpersonal relations and institutional structures will always have some presence even in the ideal society. This is not only so because they will present themselves in every newborn and every new generation, but also because phenomena such as urges for immediate satisfaction or egoistic motivations with regard to other persons are a normal part of the life of full-fledged adults as well.

What does happen however is that in cultivated adult persons the layers that are 'earlier' in the idealized developmental account are infused with phenomena belonging to the 'later' or more developed layers: the immediate desires of a cultivated adult are not those of an animal or a human infant, and the unequal or strategic relations of recognition between cultivated adults rarely take quite the brutal form of mastery and slavery. Still, the virtue of a top-down reading is to emphasize that both nature in the form of physiological need and desire, and the 'half-spiritual', instrumentalizing or strategic relations and attitudes are never totally overcome or eliminated, but play various roles also in forms of well-organized and cultivated social life that realizes concrete freedom maximally. Hegel's theory of the state, presented in the Philosophy of Objective Spirit is centrally about the ideal institutional framework in which each of these layers of human being (the natural, the 'half-spiritual', and the fully spiritual) co-exist in such a way that they constitute social life that is life that is—all things considered—maximally free in the concrete sense of freedom.

Conclusion

To think of 'recognition' as a center point of a new paradigm in social and political philosophy, or perhaps even more broadly, requires thinking of it as a collective philosophical and scientific endeavor. This, in its turn, requires efforts to think through the distinguishing and unifying features in the various currently existing approaches and perspectives to the theme and the implicit or explicit understandings of the central concepts they involve. It also requires a clear awareness of the plurality of issues at work in the writings on the theme by the central common reference, Hegel. In this article I have drawn attention to the plurality of meanings that 'recognition' has in one central text by Hegel, and briefly outlined some of the connections between them. These are among the many distinctions and connections that a more synthetic work on the theme—both Hegel-scholarship and systematic thought—should in my view be cognizant of if it wants to advance recognition-theory as a paradigm.

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