

FREEDOM AND INSTITUTION: THEORY OF JUSTICE AS HEGELIAN
“SITTLICHSLEHRE” IN A. HONNETH’S
DAS RECHT DER FREIHEIT

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Abstract

The normative reconstruction of our modern society that A. Honneth adopts as a method for the theory of justice in his *Das Recht der Freiheit* (2011) follows on from his interpretation of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* in his earlier book *Das Leiden an Unbestimmtheit* (2001). In this paper, it is argued that Honneth’s theoretical development here is the necessary result of his theory of recognition, but that it also implies some theoretical problems. These are as follows: (1) the circularity problem; (2) the gerrymandering problem; and (3) the implicit shift of the grounds of normativity. The last problem in particular implies an important theoretical turn from his formal position that could upset his program of the revision of Critical Theory through the theory of recognition.

I. *Introduction*

Honneth’s new book, *Das Recht der Freiheit: Grundriß einer demokratischen Sittlichkeit* (RF), is to be understood as a continuation of, on the one hand, the theory of recognition that he put forward in his *Kampf um Anerkennung* (KA), and, on the other hand, the Hegelian turn that he took in his *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit* (LU). In the former, he developed a socio-philosophical model of conflict called “the Struggle for Recognition (Kampf um Anerkennung),” as an alternative to Hobbes’s “bellum omnium contra omnes.” Hobbes’s model assumes that the human is an atomistic being who is striving for self-preservation, and that the community or society only exists by contract from the individuals, and is therefore artificial. According to Honneth’s model in the *Kampf um Anerkennung*, the individuals struggle with each other, not for their self-preservation but for their recognition of others, and then notice during the conflict that they were in a relation of recognition beforehand: they have already been unconsciously co-existing and recognizing each other. Here, Honneth presented three types of recognition that we can assume in our post-traditional society: love, law, and solidarity. His theory of the “demokratische Sittlichkeit” that he develops in his new book, where he reconstructs modern social reality in part III, is an implementation of this triadic concept of recognition.

While this is relatively easily to accept, the “Hegelian turn” needs to be more closely explained. In the *Kampf um Anerkennung*, Honneth began his argument with an analyses of Hegel’s texts: it was from these that he extracted his triadic models of recognition. However,

the texts of Hegel that he took up and analyzed are solely from Hegel's Jena era, that is, they were texts from the young Hegel who had not yet written the *Phenomenology* or his other systematic works. Indeed, in this work Honneth condemned the mature Hegel as an idealist who reduced everything to the absolute subject, extinguished the intersubjective elements that he had previously developed.¹ Honneth also argued that, even though we could learn the concept of the "struggle for recognition" from them, the texts of the young Hegel were too metaphysical to be re-actualized in our post-metaphysical times.

This was why Honneth also made use of the interaction theory of G. H. Mead and had to naturalize Hegel's theory of recognition.² However, his negative attitude towards Hegel changed in the 2000s. In the *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, he presented an interpretation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, in which he found an alternative theory of justice that he argued replace the mainstream Kantian theory of justice that Rawls and Habermas both represent. Recently, he has accepted the theory of recognition in the chapter of *Selbstbewusstsein* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that he formerly condemned.³ It is against this background of his changing evaluation of the mature Hegel that Honneth's new book is to be understood. Indeed, in the preface for the Japanese translation of the *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, he had stated that he planned to design grounds of social justice that would lead to a social study, and his interpretation of Hegel in the book oriented this work.⁴ His new book is taken to be an accomplishment of this plan.

In the following, I will first sketch Honneth's reactualization of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (II). Second, I will summarize his concept of normative reconstruction and his classification of freedom (III, IV). Next, I will examine another of Honneth's important categories, social pathology (V), and finally, I will clarify some theoretical problems that his Hegelianism, and especially the method of normative reconstruction, involve (VI).

II. Honneth's Reactualization of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

Honneth complains about the contemporary situation of political philosophy, in which the Lockean or Kantian concepts of justice are prevailing. According to these concepts, the norms have to be independent from existing societies or political and social institutions. Indeed, neither Rawls nor Habermas deduces their principles or norms independently from existing society: rather, they both reconstruct the norms from the modern liberal-democratic society. However, they do not take the various concrete institutions in this society into consideration. Other political philosophers, including Michael Walzer, David Miller, and Alasdair MacIntyre, do undertake some analyses of society, and come closer to the Hegelian social theory. However, Honneth sees them as unsuccessful in putting the analyses of social realities and the norm theory together (RF, 160). Their attempts—according to Honneth—revealed only "how far we stand from the model of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" (RF, 16).

¹ KA, 12, 104-105.

² Honneth distances himself from this attitude when later reviewing G. H. Mead. He abandoned the idea of explaining the possibility of transformation of the given interactional relations with the <I> of the latter, and instead referred to D. Winnicott's psychoanalytical theory of suckling (Honneth 2003a, 312).

³ Honneth 2010, pp. 7-8, 15-48.

⁴ Honneth 2009.

Honneth finds the actuality of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in its reconciliation between social reality and morality. It is against the background of this claim that he develops his interpretation of Hegel's two categories: "the Objective Spirit (der objektive Geist)" and "Sittlichkeit." These are the concepts that Honneth, in his *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, took to be the heart of the post-metaphysical actuality in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (LU, 14-16). According to this post-metaphysical interpretation, the 'Objective Spirit' no longer means an alienated spirit that will be reduced into the 'Absolute Spirit'. Instead, Honneth argues that the core of that concept is that "all social reality has a rational structure" (LU, 15). The word "Spirit" is to be understood as an expression of rationality, so the "Objective Spirit" means that some rationality belongs to the social reality. The existing institutions have—so Honneth argues—a rationality, because they enable certain reproductions of themselves and therefore of society as whole. Besides, it is assumed that the values shared by contemporary people are embedded in the social institutions. One can say they are rational as forms of social reproduction, which reflect the shared values. This idea of the "Objective Spirit" is concerned with one of Honneth's most important socio-philosophical categories, that of pathology: when these values are damaged, it causes pains for the people concerned (LU, Ch. 2). According to this conception of the "Objective Spirit", the first two sections of the *Philosophy of Right*, "The Abstract Law" and "The Morality," offer the pathology of modern times and society that the two inadequate conceptions of freedom have brought about.

The second concept that Honneth wanted to adopt from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is that of "Sittlichkeit." This includes at least two points that can make sense in today's political philosophy: first, the "Sittlichkeit" means a space of interaction in which people's inclinations and moral norms can fit together. Our inclinations, desires, wishes, and so on are not independent from society and its institutions, but are formed in them. Therefore, morality must not ignore the social institutions. Second, in Hegel, the "Sittlichkeit" is structured and divided into sub-domains such as the family, the civil society, and the state. So far, Hegel has conceived a concept of "Sittlichkeit" that is based on the modern differentiated society.

Beside these two points that can be easily perceived from Hegel's concept, Honneth claims that, in the third section of the *Philosophy of Right*, the "Sittlichkeit," Hegel develops not a description, but a normative reconstruction of a modern society that should support shared values. It is this character that makes Hegel's concept of "Sittlichkeit" an alternative to the Lockean or Kantian concepts of justice, which are based on inadequate conceptions of freedom.

III. *Theory of Justice as the Normative Reconstruction of Social Reality*

Just as Hegel—according to Honneth's interpretation of his *Philosophy of Right*—developed a norm theory as a reconstruction of social reality with his concept of the "Objective Spirit" and "Sittlichkeit," Honneth wants to present this sort of normative reconstruction of our times. However, in order to function, this reconstruction needs certain presuppositions.

Honneth presents four presuppositions regarding this method. The first presupposition is that "every form of social reproduction of a society is determined by the general, commonly shared values and ideals."⁵ According to this premise, the values that are shared by members of a society might penetrate the social institutions in a certain way. This means that Honneth

conceives the social systems as not free from normativity (“normfrei”), as Habermas and Luhman would have it. This premise should enable the immanent approach of norm theory. The second premise requires us “to accept as relevant for the moral norms in a theory of justice only the values and ideals that also form conditions of reproduction of every given society as normative demands.”⁶ The second premise consists, as I noted about Honneth’s interpretation of Hegel, in the normative relevancy of social reproduction. These premises are understood as an extension of Hegel’s concept of the “Objective Spirit.” The rationality of social reality lets itself depend on the shared values that are embodied in the social institutions. It makes it possible to consider the theory of justice as an analysis of society (RF 20). It is the method of normative reconstruction that Honneth uses to undertake this analysis of society that is the basis for the normativity. In doing this, he tries “to transform the normative intentions of a theory of justice into a social theory by using the various values that are immanently grounded by society directly as a guide to sort the empirical materials.”⁷ In so far as the social reproduction reflects the shared values of a society, and always possesses a certain rationality, the description of the social realities could, in principle, become a norm theory.

While the first two presuppositions are related to Hegel’s concept of the “Objective Spirit,” the last two are related to that of the “Sittlichkeit.” The “Sittlichkeit” is —as we have seen—the concept of society, and it is divided into regions that embody their own values in terms of the reproduction of society. The third presupposition of the normative reconstruction, therefore, requires us to “distill those institutions and practices from a diversity of social reality (...) that can really regarded as right for establishing and realizing the general values.”⁸ It takes up its normative core from complex social realities. With the fourth presupposition, however, Honneth gets closer to the critical function of this method: “The method of normative reconstruction always offers the chances for a critical application, too.”⁹ Although it is considered that the general values must be found in the given social institutions, it is not clear whether they are adequately realized in them. The criteria for normative reconstruction need to enable anticipation of future development that is not completely realized in contemporary society, and to criticize its given social practices (RF 27). Therefore, normative reconstruction can simultaneously be critical reconstruction.

These are only the presuppositions or postulates that one has to assume to allow the method of normative reconstruction to function. So far, they have not been demonstrated but only assumed as presuppositions. Furthermore, there are some problems with these presuppositions themselves. I will come back to this point later (VI).

⁵ “... daß die jeweilige Form der sozialen Reproduktion einer Gesellschaft durch gemeinsam geteilte, allgemeine Werte und Ideale bestimmt ist” (RF 30).

⁶ “... als moralischen Bezugspunkt einer Theorie der Gerechtigkeit nur diejenigen Werte oder Ideale heranzuziehen, die als normative Ansprüche zugleich Reproduktionsbedingungen der jeweils gegebenen Gesellschaft bilden” (RF 20).

⁷ “Darunter ist ein Verfahren zu verstehen, welches die normativen Absichten einer Gerechtigkeitstheorie dadurch gesellschaftstheoretisch umzusetzen versucht, daß es die immanent gerechtfertigten Werte direkt zum Leitfaden der Aufbereitung und Sortierung des empirischen Materials nimmt.” (RF 23)

⁸ “... aus der Mannigfaltigkeit der gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit diejenigen Institutionen oder Praktiken herauszudestillieren oder, methodisch gesprochen, normative zu rekonstruieren, die tatsächlich als geeignet gelten können, die allgemeinen Werte sicherzustellen und zu verwirklichen.” (RF 30)

⁹ “... daß das Verfahren der normativen Rekonstruktion stets auch die Chance einer kritischen Anwendung bietet.” (RF 28)

IV. *Three Types of Freedom*

In *Das Recht der Freiheit*, Honneth develops the two concepts that he has extracted from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and uses these as models for his theory of justice as social analyses ("Gesellschaftsanalyse"). They enabled him to conceive social theory as a norm theory. Honneth also puts forward three concepts of freedom that he has adopted from his own earlier work. In *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, he identified three models of freedom in Hegel: the negativistic, the optional, and the communicative freedom. Now in his recent book he has formulated these three types of freedom as the negative, the reflexive, and the social freedom.

We should not miss here a trace of the influence of Isaiah Berlin's distinction between negative and positive liberty. The negative liberty is—like the negativistic or negative freedom in Honneth—defined by Berlin as a lack of external interferences. While this can be formulated as the freedom of "free-from," positive freedom can be characterized as "free-to." This is freedom in the sense of self-determination. With the introduction of this distinction between types of freedom, Berlin tried to support political liberalism against nationalism, totalitarianism, communism, and even democracy.¹⁰ According to him, positive freedom is always accompanied by the possibility of ignoring or oppressing irrational factors such as inclinations, affections, and so on. It splits the self into two parts, one of which controls the other. This duplication of the self is not only to be understood intra-, but also interpersonally, that is, collectively. The concept of positive freedom is, for Berlin, the origin of totalitarianism.

It is well known that this theory of liberty has already been criticized by Charles Taylor.¹¹ Like him, Honneth claims that the negative concept of freedom is inadequate and based on a false assumption, because we could misunderstand our own desires. As Taylor argued, we give precedence to some purposes over others in our society.¹² The values we put on our purposes are not disconnected from the communities to which we belong.

What Honneth presents as negative freedom in *Das Recht der Freiheit* corresponds to Berlin's concept. He formulates it in the following way: individuals receive the right to act arbitrarily without external restriction or being forced to examine their own motives as long as they do not infringe the equivalent rights of their fellow citizens. This is freedom from the outer point of view, respecting every willing of the subjects regardless of the origin of the motives. Honneth identifies Hobbes's conceptualization of liberty as an absence of outer resistance as the first use of this concept of negative freedom in the history of political philosophy. Locke, J. S. Mill, R. Nozick and J.-P. Sartre also belong to this tradition (RF 44-57).

While Berlin's concept of positive liberty includes both monological and intersubjective versions, Honneth distinguishes between the reflexive and the social freedom.¹³ The second type of freedom, reflexive freedom, is the art in which the subjects reflect on and assess their motives and influence the willing. Honneth sees Rousseau as the first theorist of this type of

¹⁰ Berlin 1969.

¹¹ Taylor 1985.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ This distinction — as we will see later — does not, however, strictly correspond to the distinction between the monological and the collective.

freedom. After him, this tradition has divided itself into two streams: one is Kantian freedom in the sense of self-determination (autonomy), and the other is related to Herder in the sense of authenticity.¹⁴ While the former suggests determining the maxim for oneself, according to the possibility of its universalization and respecting as a person others who can make moral decisions in the same way, the latter emphasizes that the subjects form themselves by some general mediums like language, and then find and become able to express their own selves.

Honneth's third concept of freedom is social freedom: in the social freedom that he finds in Hegel, recognizing others, which is only possible in social institutions, is a constitutive element of the freedom of individuals. In this model, the wishes of their co-citizens should not be understood as outer restrictions for their own wishes. Rather, these are built through them. It is in this embedment of self-realization in social relations that reciprocal recognition plays a substantial role. Honneth uses Hegel's words to formulate this description of the reciprocal recognition: "Bei-sich-selbst-Sein im Anderen (being to oneself in the other)." This freedom is possible in that the subjects meet others with whom they can have relations of reciprocal recognition within their institutional practices, and there they can find the conditions of their own self-realization (RF 86).

If reflexive freedom, in comparison with the negative freedom, expanded the concept of freedom through the inclusion of the self-relational subjectivity, social freedom expanded it through the inclusion of objectivity and social institutions. According to social freedom, social institutions are not added to or deduced from an external concept of freedom that might be set independently from them, but they are constitutive of it. From this concept of social freedom, another concept of justice also results: justice is no more to be deduced by social contracts among those subjects who are inclined to egoistically realize their own wishes or to be determined by monological self-reflection, but it is instead assessed as to whether it allows the individuals to access the regions of social institutions of social practices that make possible their reciprocal recognitions and self-realizations.

So far, I have reconstructed Honneth's explanation about the three types of freedom, what they are, and especially what social freedom looks like. But how can he claim that this type of freedom has priority over others? He offers two reasons as to why we must not reduce the concepts of justice to the offering and giving reasons for barely formal abstract principles (RF 119). The first, methodological, reason is that we only have the access to the social realities to be found with such concepts after the principles have been established.¹⁵ He considers this situation "unfortunate (mißlich)" (RF 119), as it is, in principle, impossible to say beforehand whether one can really apply principles to reality that have only been theoretically deduced. Nevertheless, we have to say that this is not an argument against the two other models of freedom, but only a declaration of Honneth's own position. Because those who argue for the principles of justice, which are based on the negative and reflexive concepts of freedom, shall object to the claim that the principles of justice should necessarily pre-empt the applicability or realizability. Some inapplicable principles are naturally not attractive, but this cannot be a reason why we have to adopt only concepts of freedom that enable us to take up known applicable principles.

¹⁴ To the concept of authenticity, cf. Triling 1972, Taylor 1991.

¹⁵ "... daß damit die normative Theorie in die mißliche Lage grät, erst nachträglich wieder Anschluß an die soziale Realität finden zu müssen". (RF 119)

The second, more fundamental, reason for the priority of social freedom over the two others is that it is to be assumed that "various interpretations of value (...) are embodied in such institutional spheres of actions."¹⁶ In this claim, Honneth has to make two assumptions. First, he assumes that the negative and reflexive models of freedom are also embodied in social institutions. For example, we can and have to use a negative freedom in the case of the violation of our properties, although this freedom does not acquiesce with all social claims. In another example, when it seems that social realities are violating values that could be considered as substantial, we need room to retreat into reflexive freedom in order to monologically reflect whether we ought to follow these social tendencies. We sometimes need room to retreat into as a reaction against the conflicts with other communication partners that the negative and reflexive models of freedom offer. In this respect, his second assumption is that it is a cognitive fault if these two models of freedom are regarded as general, because it reveals the insufficiency of cognition about the models themselves. These models are also to be understood as having the social roots, and therefore as being merely derivative of the social freedom.

It is also very important and plausible that Honneth does not simply treat the distinction between reflexive and social freedoms as the same as the difference between the individual and collective freedoms. He lets the theory of the discourse of Habermas and Apel belong not to social but to reflexive freedom. The communication-theoretical approach of Apel and Habermas does include certain insights into the social conditions of freedom, and frees rationality from monological reflection. However, they also regard communication as a subject of self-determination about norms, determining what is right. But the social institution that they find constitutive of freedom is one of discourse, which takes a transcendental status as a meta-institution, although this is developed from the practice in the *Lebenswelt*. In the end, as Honneth formulates, "they make no decision as to the historical concretion" of their theory (RF 82), and the normativity has no relation to the various real concrete institutions which have been formed historically.

V. *Social Pathology as Result of Inadequate Conceptions of Freedom*

There is one more, and also for Honneth more important, reason why the negative and reflexive freedoms are insufficient, and one has to argue for social freedom. Negative and reflexive freedoms lead to the creation of social pathology. In the *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, he interpreted the two first chapters of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, "the Abstract Right" and "the Morality," as diagnoses of the sickness of the times, and developed the concept of pathology as a result of the insufficient conceptions of freedom. It was words such as "solitude (Einsamkeit)" (§ 136), "inanity (Leerheit)" (§ 141), "depression (Gedrücktheit)" (§ 149) that Hegel uses in these chapters that should be the marks for his diagnoses of the modern times. These words expressed the suffering that the insufficient conceptions of freedom, namely, the negativistic and optional, can cause in the society.

Alongside with this line that Honneth developed in his *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, he

¹⁶ "daß es jeweils verschiedene Deutungen dieses einen Wertes waren, die in solchen institutionellen Handlungssphären zur Verkörperung gelangt sind." (RF 122)

presents in part B of *Das Recht der Freiheit* the social pathology that results from the “legal freedom,” which is based on negative freedom, and from the “moral freedom,” which is based on reflexive freedom. The first pathology of legal freedom appears in people’s personalities when they see law not as an instrument but as a purpose, and themselves only as a bearer of law and resorting to reconciliation not by communication but only by law. Honneth thinks that someone generally avoiding acting is also an indirect result of legal freedom. This hesitation to act is only in order to shirk obligations that the laws demand in conflicts, and to avoid orienting oneself to the given laws.

For moral freedom, the pathology appears in a) the “unbound moralist (unverbundener Moralist)” and b) “moral terrorism.” In the former, a person applies her/his norms beyond their validity to all of the social practices of life. By obeying moral principles in which he inflexibly believes, he becomes isolated from society and loses any social communication with his colleagues (RF208). The person with this personality also totalizes the narrow concept of freedom and sets herself/himself up as having the legislative power to give laws. He behaves “as if the given world were not already coined by a series of normative rules that bound the horizon of our moral considerations in advance.”¹⁷ Moral terrorism is also a result of an attitude that ignores the given norms and sets himself up as the legislature. This person, however, does not retreat into herself/himself, but co-opts other persons. As an example, he names Ulrike Meinhof who led the RAF in the 1970s.

In this pathology as a critique of the times, Honneth is following Hegel, whom he interpreted in the *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*. This negative description of the results of the insufficient concepts of freedom is not additional to, but constructive for, his critical-theoretical concept of justice. It is in Hegel’s theory of “Sittlichkeit” that Honneth finds the therapy for these pathologies, and then the positive theory of justice, now (LU ch. 5 and 6). Following this schema, part C of *Das Recht der Freiheit* offers the “Sittlichkeitslehre” of his theory of justice, which is based on the social conception of freedom.¹⁸

VI. Norm and Social Realities

As I pointed out, Honneth’s acceptance of the philosophy of the mature systematic Hegel in his works in the 2000s allows him to take up the method of normative reconstruction in *Das Recht der Freiheit*. In the *Kampf um Anerkennung*, Honneth had indeed rejected the works of the mature Hegel from being the bases of his theory of recognition. However, in his early book, Honneth presented the three types of recognition, not in abstract schemes independent from social historical realities, but understanding them as three realms of recognition that develop and are embedded in the modern society. It was not until the differentiation of the sub-realms of society that, for example, the respect of someone as a legal person could be separated from the social standing in which the respect is strictly bounded with social evaluations

¹⁷ “... so als ob die je gegebene Welt nicht schon durch eine Reihe von normativen Regeln geprägt wäre, die den Horizont unserer moralischen Erwägungen vorgängig begrenzen.” (RF 208)

¹⁸ In this paper, in which I want to concentrate on the methodological problems of Honneth’s *Das Recht der Freiheit*, we do not have to delve into part C, which takes up half of the entire volume of this book, and in which he indeed develops the normative reconstruction of our society in detail.

(Wertschätzung) (KA 173-195). It must be therefore understood as a direct consequence of his original concept of the theory of recognition that he develops his method of normative reconstruction from the mature Hegel.

I would not like to discuss whether this interpretation of Hegel is right or wrong, but to point out some internal problems with this theory. The first problem with this method of normative reconstruction is its circularity. In this method, the logical circularity is inevitable: the norms should be taken up from the social realities, but it is not possible to take up the norms if we do not already have the norms with which social reality can be evaluated. However, this theoretical circularity needs to be accepted if we want to refute the Kantian mainstream approach to the theory of justice.

The second problem is that one can use this method of social reconstruction to argue anything that one likes as a norm (gerrymandering problem).¹⁹ Although one can judge to some extent from historical and social-scientific knowledge whether the values that are taken up by normative reconstruction from the social realities or institutions have any objectivity, it nevertheless remains dependent on the interpreter which values are judged as socially shared if the social institutions are conflicted regarding some values. The social reality is so complex that we cannot simply determine what is shared.

The third problem refers especially to Honneth's theory of pathology. This is a very important point when we want to determine the theoretical contribution of Honneth in the tradition of Critical Theory: one of the most important motives of his theory of recognition is to deduce the social normativity, not from the linguistic pragmatics as in Habermas, but to set as the grounds of it the feelings or sufferings that the subjects could have in their Lebenswelt. This concept of the normativity of pathology or suffering can be traced back to the theory of disrespect (Misshandlung) in the *Kampf um Anerkennung*. Honneth explains this in his essay "Die soziale Dynamik von Mißachtung": it is not appropriate to take up the social normativity from language pragmatics, because this theory assumes that the relevant persons are capable of using language appropriately, and so far only represents the citizens in the social stratum that includes those who would be able to do it (AG 96-101). As he identified the pathology in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, he was following this line, and because of it, justice could be conceived as therapy for the social pathology. However, in *Das Recht der Freiheit*, this point of suffering in which he found the grounds of normativity seems to have become detached from the concept of pathology. He says that we can speak of social pathology, "when the developments of society considerably damage the rational abilities of the members of the society who participate in the decisive forms of social cooperation."²⁰ What Honneth means by alluding to the considerable damages to rational abilities here is disability, meaning someone cannot understand the sense of social practices. However, this does not mean that one necessarily becomes unable to understand directly the meanings of her/his social practices. What one cannot understand in this pathology, however, is the second order meanings, the grammar of social practices: someone in this position could not use the two first types of

¹⁹ Regarding this problem in inducing the norms from the social realities, see Brandom 1994, ch.1.

²⁰ "Von einer 'sozialen Pathologie' können wir in Zusammenhängen der Sozialtheorie immer dann sprechen, wenn wir es mit gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen zu tun haben, die zu einer nennenswerten Beeinträchtigung der rationalen Fähigkeiten der Gesellschaftsmitglieder führen, an maßgeblichen Formen der sozialen Kooperation teilzunehmen." (RF 157)

freedom in their adequate situations.²¹ If this assumption is right—as I think is plausible—its theoretical consequence is not to be missed. If the suffering is removed from the social pathology, the criterion of the diagnosis belongs no more to the patient her/himself, but is dependent on the view of the person who gives the diagnosis. Indeed, the types of personality whom Honneth diagnoses as pathologic do not suffer in themselves. They are pathologic only from the point of view of the doctor or social critics. This consequence seems me fatal for Honneth's concept of Critical Theory, especially because, in his controversy with Nancy Fraser, Honneth himself previously emphasized the inwardness of critique as he characterized the tradition of the left Hegelianism of the Critical Theory with the dialectics of transcendence and immanence. This had to mean that the prospect of the future society, or social normativity, has to be formed from within society itself.²² However, this dialectic has dropped out of his theory of pathology that he develops in *Das Recht der Freiheit*.

VII. Conclusion

Honneth needs to adopt the method of normative reconstruction in *Das Recht der Freiheit*, because his theory of recognition was already such a reconstruction, in so far as it proposes three types of recognition as coming from the modern, differentiated society. This led to the acceptance and reinterpretation of the mature, systematic Hegel. However, it also implies some theoretical problems. The implicit shift of the grounds of pathology that is found in *Das Recht der Freiheit* implies such a significant theoretical turn from his former position that it could ruin his program of the revision of the Critical Theory by the theory of recognition.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AG: Axel Honneth, *Das Andere der Gerechtigkeit, Aufsätze zur praktischen Philosophie* Frankfurt am Main, 2000.
 KA: Axel Honneth, *Kampf um Anerkennung. Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte*, Frankfurt am Main, 2004 (1. Auflage: 1992).
 LU: Axel Honneth, *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit. Eine Reaktualisierung der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, Stuttgart, 2001.
 RF: Axel Honneth, *Das Recht der Freiheit. Grundriß einer demokratischen Sittlichkeit*, Berlin, 2011.

²¹ Honneth restricts the causes of this pathology to social influences. He excludes mental illness that is not socially related from this concept of pathology (RF 157f.) This shift of the concept of pathology from suffering to forgetting the social freedom seems to be a result of the development of concept of reification as forgetting the original recognition in his *Verdinglichung* (Honneth 2005).

²² Honneth 2003b.

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