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Recognition, Cooperation and the Moral Pre- suppositions of Capitalist Organization of Work

Abstract: Starting from the current debate on work and recognition, the article describes how shifts within the cultural frames of work, the transformation of hierarchies into internal markets and the development of a service economy lead to problems which can take the form of a ‘paradox of recognition’. This paradox cannot be dissolved simply by a conceptual distinction between equal respect for persons and qualifying esteem of performance and efficiency, at least as long as we are interested in a matching of empirical analysis and normative critique. The normative claims for visibility and transparency of work are described as a paradigmatic case for the entanglement of questions of respect and esteem. With respect to recent developments within critical theory, the article argues that the idea of immanent critique needs further elaboration in order to accentuate the relation between normative critique and functional analysis.

1. Introduction

‘Work and recognition’ is a prominent issue in recent literature on social criticism and critical sociology (Holtgrewe et al. 2000; Voswinkel 2001; Fraser/Honneth 2003; Renault 2004; Deranty et al. 2007; v. d. Brink/Owen 2007; Kocyba 2007; Renault 2008; Deranty 2009; Nour/Lazzeri 2009; Schmidt am Busch/Zurn 2010). Recognition represents a key concept in empirical social analysis and in critical theory today. There is widespread agreement in occupational and organizational psychology that positive signals of recognition—in the sense of acknowledgement, of esteem, of appreciation, of appraisal or of approval—play an important role for work motivation. Achievement and work performance are triggered not only by monetary incentives like salaries, bonuses and options. Non-monetary incentives are of vital importance in the working sphere and in the economy in general, too. For a long time, however, those incentives like kudos, commendations or awards have eluded the attention of economists. This is beginning to change (Neckermann/Frey 2008).

The relation between money and recognition proves to be a quite complex one. In everyday life, it may be considered an insult, if we offer money in exchange for a gift, for an act of friendship or of love. If we transform an act of generosity into an exchange of economic goods, we risk violating normative expectations of social reciprocity. In other cases, there is no such divide between

money and recognition. We want fair wages *and* social esteem. We want a good job that is well paid *and* that offers opportunities for self-realization and for winning the approval of others. We want to overcome the simple alternative of “money or recognition” (Frey 2010). On the one hand, money cannot fully compensate for social disesteem. On the other hand, expressing recognition often remains somehow defective, if we refuse to pay for the work done. Today, we can no longer say that activities such as nursing, caring and household work should not be paid at all by arguing that it would be humiliating to describe acts of love as labor in the economic sense (cf. Krebs 2002). We would think of it as hypocritical if someone tried to convince us that it was an expression of esteem not to interpret an activity as a mode of work. It is no shame, if we conceive human activity as a form of work. And if we think that an activity is of social worth, we normally cannot refuse to pay for it. To acknowledge its social utility means—at least under the conditions of modern capitalist economy—to evaluate it in terms of prices.

If recognition—in the economic sphere—is linked to the language of prices, it means that social valuation is operating via markets. But recognition is not reducible to monetary incentives. The social prestige of an office, the professional reputation of work, the commendation of superiors, the positive image in the public sphere, the approval of the colleagues—all this cannot be easily translated into monetary parameters. Usually, these forms of recognition cannot be paid or sold. Yet without a certain sum of money, we would often hesitate to take the expression of recognition seriously. In such cases, the act of recognition apparently needs to be confirmed by the transfer of a certain sum of money. But money does not serve here exclusively as an economic currency. Money functions not only as an instrument of economic exchange but as a social symbol of validating esteem, too.

We can posit that, empirically, recognition—despite the internal problems of the relation between monetary and non-monetary incentives—plays an important role in the economy. Against this backdrop, we can understand that demands/claims for recognition that are systematically rejected in a given order of economic life will lead to feelings of injury, of suffering, of injustice. Not only the problem of a fair distribution of the fruits of human labor is at stake here. An analysis of social conflicts in terms of ‘struggles for recognition’ allows drawing a picture of social dynamics that is more complex than a picture that exclusively refers to questions of distribution, to complaints about exploitation and to the conflict of interests. But even if we arrive at a thick description of human suffering, we cannot immediately read this diagnosis as a critique in a normative sense, as a critique in the name of justified normative principles. And even if we arrive at a normative foundation of critique, we have to show that the phenomena of suffering social critique is focusing on are a systematic result not of human nature but of a specific organization of social life.

The Hegelian perspective of a *struggle for recognition*—at least in the specific way, in which it is presented in the work of Axel Honneth (Honneth 1996; 2008; 2010)—aims at bringing together normative theory and empirical analysis of society. Honneth aims at an articulation of experiences of suffering and distress

that ensue from alienating working conditions. Following Durkheim and Parsons he insists on the decisive role of institutionalized norms and values as conditions of reproduction of a given society. Without reducing normative critique to empirical analysis, Honneth's idea of 'normative reconstruction' is devoted to a form of 'internal critique' that refers to normative claims that are based on intersubjectively shared values, not just on our individual moral intuitions.

To be sure, it is an ambitious and fascinating project that covers complex empirical and normative questions in light of one integrating conceptual perspective. In my article, I will focus on the following points: Under the conditions of modern organization of work and of post-bureaucratic management politics, we are faced with an erosion of traditional forms of recognition and at the same time with a rising demand for recognition in the economic sphere. I will discuss this in terms of a 'paradox of recognition' (2). Starting with this problem, I will look at theoretical differences between the concepts of respect, recognition and esteem that are often neglected by sociological analysis (3). Following this, I will discuss the implications of Honneth's reconstruction of 'moral presuppositions of capitalist organization of work' as a basis for a normative claim for visibility of work and transparency of cooperation (4). In the concluding remarks, I will come back to the question of normative and institutional presuppositions of cooperative work and to the idea of an internal critique based on the concept of recognition, and try to show that its normative core is closely linked to the idea of respect even where it refers to the estimation of achievement and desert (5).

2. The Paradox of Recognition

Why do we depend on recognition in the economic sphere? Why do we think it necessary to be recognized for our contributions in the process of social cooperation? Why is it not enough to get money for work and to experience recognition in personal relations between friends, in the family or in the community? We can find an anthropological argument for the crucial role of recognition in all domains of social action in Adams Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*:

"Nature, when she formed man for society, endowed him with an original desire to please, and an aversion to offend his brethren. She taught him to feel pleasure in their favourable, and pain in their unfavourable regard." (Smith 1982, 116)

But even if we follow the anthropological argument that man is formed by nature to seek social recognition in all his activities, we have to go one step further in order to explain why the demand for recognition is so urgent today, although at the same time the prospects for recognition in the economic sphere become more and more problematic.

Here we have to discuss empirical traits of our present society. Let's start with a broad picture of ongoing changes with respect to work organization. We can observe an erosion of hierarchies and other institutions in the economic field like standardized occupational careers, formal ranks, crafts and guilds, licenses

and accreditations. They do not vanish completely, but they lose their grip. Those regulatory structures were very often seen as forms of domination and control, preventing us from living an autonomous or at least a less restricted life. But at the same time, those regulations offered a frame for biographical stability and for consistent patterns of social expectations. Usually, in everyday life, we do not necessarily see traditional forms of normative regulations and conventions as stabilizing orders of recognition. But we may do so, if we feel left alone in social situations marked by complexity and uncertainty. The quest for recognition often looks back to a paradise lost that formerly was not experienced as a paradise at all.

In the economic sphere, the triumph of the liberal market model weakened traditional orders of recognition. Markets were no longer conceived as a device to coordinate the action of independent corporate actors that internally followed another logic of coordination, that of hierarchy. Processes of outsourcing and off-shoring increasingly led to a disintegration of corporate structures. The idea of internal markets tries to substitute hierarchies by market mechanisms even where there is no formal transformation of legal structures. Coordination via prices leads to a predominance of monetary forms of valuation. If the evaluation of our work depends on anonymous market processes that normally cannot be influenced by our behavior in detail, we risk losing the basis for our self-evaluation. At the same time, in the case of services in which our work does not lead to tangible and stackable products, the classical patterns of industrial production and the fundamental divide between production and marketing loses its structuring force. As in the case of production-on-demand, it is no longer self-evident that production precedes market transactions. Where there is no 'revealed' social demand, there is no incentive to start producing goods or services. The customer becomes the critical element within the process of value creation. It is no longer the product that serves as a social basis for recognition, but the utility for a customer who is willing and able to pay for the service or the commodity. I cannot work and only then take a look at what the customer wants: if there is no customer, there will be no working process at all. This means that we are depending on the approval of others in a more fundamental sense than in the case of industrial mass production. We depend on the valuation of others, yet those others often do not think in terms of services and the values offered by services, but only see products which they want to buy at the lowest possible price without taking into consideration the role and the value of the services jointly delivered. The ignorance vis-à-vis the role of services proves to be an economic and a social problem. The expectations of recognition are no longer fulfilled within traditional institutions of recognition, therefore economic actors need new forms of self-assurance that help them to cope with the uncertainties of market processes.

Yet even if the experience of being recognized by others is of crucial importance for the psychological well-being of social actors, it is not immediately clear that this demand for recognition is of compelling normative relevance. In social philosophy, recognition is at least a highly ambivalent concept: Recognition can be seen as an instrument of influencing people. This is the point of departure

of a critical discourse that hints at the incompatibility of recognition with the modern idea of personal autonomy. This line of argument can be traced back to Rousseau's analysis of *amour propre* as a form of self-love making us depend upon the opinion of others (Neuhouser 2008). From this perspective, recognition is an effect of positive signals of esteem from the outside, of estimation by relevant others, may they be colleagues, customers, clients, superiors or central figures of public discourse. Recognition is supposed to lead to a form of dependency on the approval by others which is inconsistent with the modern ideal of autonomous self-determination.

But this problem of consistency between the ideal of autonomy and the search for a positive feedback from others does not mean that the demand for recognition would diminish empirically. On the contrary, the 'quest for recognition' seems to become more and more urgent in the economic sphere that was formerly thought to be governed by (economic) value and prices only and not by (normative) values and moral: The erosion of classical institutions of recognition (hierarchies, occupational carriers, honors and awards) causes problems for the 'supply chain' of recognition. At the same time, in many contexts of social life, it can be self-defeating, if we let others know that we are overtly seeking recognition—this is not compatible with our self-presentation as autonomous and independent actors. Paradoxically, recognition can be gained only by those, who do not give the impression that they deserve such external motivational support (Elster 1993; Baurmann 2002; Brennan/Pettit 2004; Kocyba 2009): "Nothing is so unimpressive as behavior designed to impress." (Elster 1983, 66) The effect of this 'teleological paradox' (Scanlon 1998) or the paradox of actions aimed at 'states that are essentially by-products' (Elster 1983; 1986) is not that people are no longer striving for recognition, but that the 'struggle for recognition' has to take an indirect form as in the case of the 'economy of esteem' analyzed by Brennan and Pettit (Brennan/Pettit 2004; Lazzeri 2007).

But if overtly seeking recognition, in the sense of esteem, is in danger of becoming self-defeating, why then is 'striving for recognition' so important today? Why do we observe such an urgent need for recognition and why is it at the same time so difficult to establish honest relations of recognition in the working sphere? Striving for recognition, as we already highlighted, is, at least to a certain degree, incompatible with the modern ideal of autonomy and self-realization. And to depend on the conferral of recognition by outside instances is not compatible with the new ideal of work based on concepts like "subjectivation of work" (Arbeitsgruppe SubArO 2004), "human capital entrepreneur" ("Arbeitskraftunternehmer" (Pongratz/Voß 2003)) or "entrepreneur of the self" (as discussed in the work of Michel Foucault on biopolitics (Foucault 2008)). At the same time, expressing an act of recognition often raises the suspicion of being only instrumentally motivated (Kocyba 2000; Honneth 2007). In economic contexts, signals of esteem can be perceived as inauthentic: they are compromised if interpreted as instrumental efforts to motivate people to raise productivity without remuneration being raised. This is why it becomes more and more difficult to ensure the credibility and authenticity of acts of recognition referring to

the performance of work. Seeking esteem is a paradoxical endeavour only under specific social conditions.

Even if esteem is essentially a by-product of an action directed towards an external goal or whose immediate purpose may be ‘getting it right’, it is not necessarily self-defeating if it becomes visible to others that we thereby look for esteem. As a professional, I can overtly look for the estimation of my work performance without undermining my image as a professional worker. And if somebody highly estimates the result of my work and pays for it, we would see nothing wrong with it—except in cases, in which institutionalized rules do not allow the commodification of specific activities.

The fact that the struggle for recognition may lead to paradoxical behaviors (Elster 1993, 50) does not imply that the struggle for recognition becomes obsolete, but that we use indirect ways to arrive at the desired result. But if we, having tactically concealed our aim to acquire esteem, indeed succeed in acquiring esteem, it can leave us with some feeling of inauthenticity. Perhaps it is a situation similar to the problem of predestination in protestant ethics, in which we cannot directly try to bring about salvation as a result of teleological action. But we have to take a closer look: not every form of recognition or esteem can be realized (only) in an indirect manner. If someone tries to impress us

“with their ability at mathematics, or their elegance in ballet, or their virtuosity at the piano, or their effectiveness in providing a speedy and high-quality service does not undermine the impression that they achieve [. . .]. We may indeed disesteem them for the lack of modesty but we may well respond in the way they wanted us to respond by forming a high opinion of their mathematical ability, their balletic elegance, their musical virtuosity, or their market effectiveness.” (Brennan/Pettit 2000, 86)

The ‘Elster-paradox’ in the strict sense would arise only if they tried to impress us without performing any substantive activities scoring higher than average. And we normally do not think that our behavior should be wholly indifferent towards the opinion of others. According to Brennan and Pettit, we “would think of people who are wholly indifferent to what any other thinks of them, when the other has the chance to scrutinize, as little short of moral monsters”. It is an empirical question under which conditions and to which extent pursuing esteem becomes self-defeating.

Of course we cannot pay for the result or at least we should not pay the referee or the critic. But this does not prevent us from wanting to be a good football player or novelist. The problem here is not that we compete for success, but that our success is no commodity. Even in capitalism, there are things we can compete for without being allowed to pay for them. It is not the teleological paradox in the strict sense that is at stake here. We may use prestige, wealth or success in order to impress somebody and to win her sympathy, but if the instrumental character of such an effort becomes so dominant that it can be seen as an attempt to buy instead of winning sympathy, this may reduce the chances of the success of such instrumental action. In this sense, our everyday life contains

situations of competition, of rivalry and of struggle for recognition in which the intended success cannot be reached directly with the help of economic forms of exchange. And there are other contexts in which it is not the monetary paradox, but the more general paradox of instrumental action that undermines the success of action, as in the case of ‘self-realization in work’ aiming at satisfaction: “In self-realization, the purpose is to achieve something and the satisfaction is supervenient upon the achievement rather than the immediate purpose of the activity.” (Elster 1986, 100) In a social context of formal ranks and honors, it might be easier to pursue the search for recognition in a direct manner. Today, the new management of work, as described by Boltanski and Chiapello (2006), explains why there is a rising demand for recognition and esteem and at the same time an erosion of its institutionalized patterns and procedures.

Yet, the new paradigm of human resource management is not the only factor leading to a crisis of the established orders of esteem. The question of recognition of work becomes more and more important when—in contrast to traditional craftsmanship—it is no longer evident what the product of a specific working activity really is. In the case of service work, we usually have no physical thing, no tangible good that has been brought into existence by concrete working activities, and in the case of financial transactions that are based on complicated mathematical models, the problem of social recognition is highly complex. How can we say that an activity is socially meaningful, that it is valuable, that its results constitute real worth, if the human labor spent is not objectified in a concrete material thing? There is no tangible piece of work, no opus that could praise its creator as in Friedrich Schiller’s *Song of the Bell*. This erosion of ‘evidence’ means that we need a different social anchoring for the recognition of work, if we can no longer expect the work piece as such to function as direct and immediate evidence of the meaningful character of our contribution to social cooperation.

Even in the classical domains of industrial production, the division of labor and the technological mediation of manufacturing make it difficult today to derive an assessment of individual contributions from the physical result of fabrication processes. The identification of individual performances depends on negotiation, on communicative action and not on production alone (Porschen/Bolte 2005; Bolte et al. 2008). In allusion to Brennan’s and Pettit’s (2004) concept of ‘esteem-services’, one might say that the process of value creation is increasingly mediated by communicative ‘value-services’. The complexity of products and processes shows that the performance of work cannot be identified with the mere physical output. This holds true for every form of labour, but is most evident in the case of service work, which is not directly visible and whose results are neither tangible nor stackable.

To summarize, the often self-defeating character of the striving for esteem is not just a matter of pure logic. But in so far as we esteem people for scoring higher than others, higher than the average, then for logical reasons esteem is limited in supply: Not everyone can be above average. And even if we speak about properties like honesty, forthrightness or kindness, esteem is given “in a good part for departures from the average in respect of these properties, not only

for the possession of the properties at an absolute level” (Brennan/Pettit 2000, 81). Even if we do not think that in the case of love or of respect, recognition should be granted gradually according to merit or to specific moral qualities of a specific agent, in the economic sphere, we would not accept the expression of pure benevolence as an authentic expression of esteem. In the domain of work and economic performance, recognition—in the sense of esteem—is internally tied to evaluation. It is not merely an expression of a pre-epistemic emotional stance or a normative attitude, but includes a cognitive and a volitional component. Recognition here means that we have to identify correctly the performance of a specific person. The evaluation of a person or of an action does not mean that we should express benevolence and generosity. In so far as an evaluation is something that is justified or justifiable, it does not depend on the generosity of the evaluator. He “cannot simply decide to think well” (Brennan/Pettit 2000, 84). Even if esteem in the realm of economic action inevitably has an instrumental aspect, it is just a limitation of total instrumentality that prevents us from regarding recognition-esteem simply as a matter of choice.

On the other hand, the social division of labor makes it difficult to decide whether and to which extent a specific activity really did contribute to a specific result. Evaluation, as is constitutive of esteem, confronts complex epistemic problems. Those problems of valuation do not only exist in social analysis, they are of crucial importance for economic action itself. The results of human labor depend on a complex process of “social validation” (Renault 2004, 215), and they must be appreciated not only as use values in a generic sense, but as goods of a specific quality. For the work of an individual to be part of collective social labour and to play a decisive role in the social division of labour, it has to be recognized as socially valid, as producing socially ‘validated’ products. Hence, recognition is not outside of the economy, but co-constitutive of economic action. The price of a product indicates the social recognition of the value of a specific work, too. In this regard, labour markets as well as commodity and service markets display recognitive aspects: the price that the market assigns to products is a reflection of the value other agents attach to them (cf. Deranty 2009, 414).

We arrive at a puzzling result: The erosion of traditional institutional patterns of work organization does not only help to overcome obsolete forms of bureaucratic regimentation of work, but at the same time eliminates the old bureaucratic proxies for social recognition at the work place like ranks, careers and standardized forms of approval. The institutional frames for the conferral of esteem are no longer a common reference. This makes it more difficult to overtly articulate the expectation of recognition-esteem. At the same time, we often have the impression that a common language that would make it possible to communicate esteem in an unambiguous way is no longer available in economic life.

Seeking recognition in contexts of merit and desert means competition, yet the recognition or esteem we gain in this field is no marketable good we could buy or which we could sell to a third person. Market economies are based on institutional constraints that prevent everything to become a marketable good. I cannot buy the right not to respect property rights. If we allowed this, we

would violate the normative core of a social practice as is the case when we allow that a referee ‘sells’ the results of a football match. Usually, we would say that we can buy a good, may it be a material thing, a specific service or even an abstract entity like an obligation as is the case with a labour contract or a financial product. But as we have seen, not every ‘service’ is a legitimate object of market transaction, even and especially if it is of high interest to social actors. In the case of the former Soviet Union (as in many other places around the world), we could observe that it was by no means self-evident which of the activities that formerly were organized by the state should be transformed into commodities. The exact divide between free enterprise and open corruption may depend on social norms and cultural traditions. Yet, there are constitutive presuppositions for the functioning of market exchange which cannot be turned into objects of market transactions. One decisive normative achievement of modern societies consists in the fundamental distinction between persons that can be owners and things that can be objects of property rights. The modern capital owner can buy the working force, but not the worker as a person, the manpower, but not ‘the man’. There is no market, at least no legal market, where we can buy the right to override the legal presuppositions of markets including the institution of property rights. But this basic distinction between persons and things—things in the sense of entities that can be objects of property rights—is fundamental for the analysis of spheres and modes of recognition, too.

3. Recognition, Respect and Esteem

Paradoxes of recognition like the teleological one, according to which esteem can only be attained (or at least more successfully attained) as a by-product of an action that is directed to another goal—the starting point of Brennan’s and Pettit’s *economy of esteem*—are problems which normally arise only in the context of estimating persons. They do not arise in the context of an economy of reputational effects that do not refer to a reputation for being a certain sort of person: “[W]hat is in question is usually a reputation for achieving a certain result—meeting deadlines, satisfying certain criteria of quality and the like.” (Brennan/Pettit 2000, 79) Yet the problem of esteem is not the same in the case of estimating persons as in the case of estimating (marketable or non-marketable) goods or performances. In the latter case, the problem of the teleological paradox will not arise—but this case of positive qualification of goods or actions in the sense of winning a reputation is not in the very centre of the normative issue of esteem. And for the purposes of a normative reconstruction we have to focus on the esteem of persons and its internal relation to other forms of recognition.

For most participants of the ongoing philosophical debate on recognition it is essential to elaborate a clear distinction between respect and esteem. Andreas Wildt (2005) for instance insists on the difference between the concept of respect, which is systematically developed in the Kantian tradition in the context of the debate on the principles of morality and of rights which is characterised by a clear normative direction, and a broader and still often equivocal use of

the concept of recognition, whose normative horizon still has to be elaborated. In her debate with Honneth, Nancy Fraser (2010), too, argues for a narrower analytical focussing of the concept of recognition, but her proposal hints at the opposite direction. She thinks that we should use the term ‘recognition’ when we speak of issues of respect and identity, which are not questions of evaluating performances and struggling about questions of distribution, whereas we should rely on another, more classical, conceptual base when we analyse questions of work, economic reproduction and the conflicts of distribution arising in this domain.

Based on Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* and the founding idea that mutual recognition is to be understood not from the perspective of *amour propre* but as constitutive for individual autonomy, Axel Honneth (1996) has outlined a theory of recognition that basically refers to persons, not to the problem of recognition in the sense of identifying things, facts or objects, and only implicitly to phenomena such as acknowledging norms, institutions or principles. It encompasses three domains, each of them governed by a specific form of recognition that yields a corresponding form of self-relation: in the case of intimate relations, love serves as a necessary base for self-confidence, in the sphere of rights, recognition in the form of respect serves as a base for self-respect, and in the sphere of work and social cooperation, recognition in the form of esteem serves as a basis for self-esteem. Self-confidence and self-respect are not to be seen in a reductionist way as results from economic processes or in a functionalist manner merely as a non-economic requirement of economy, but we must presuppose capabilities of self-confidence and self-respect as a basis for persons to act within the sphere of *bourgeois society*. It causes severe pathologies if the functioning of the economic system is inconsistent with the social processes necessary for the development of self-confidence and personal identity or of self-respect as a subject of rights. It is not the economic process, not the sphere of work, that brings into existence rights and identities by some causal mechanism, but if there are distortions in the sphere of rights or of personal identity, this will cause serious problems for the functioning of the economic sphere, too. Therefore, even if economics is mainly about the process of social valuation of goods and services, it is nevertheless based on institutionalized normative principles that go beyond the horizon of instrumentality. If economic agents are to be conceived as persons, we cannot see them only as instruments, even if we think of economy as a sphere of instrumental action.

However, beyond respect there are other forms of recognitive practices that are of functional as well as of normative relevance for economic action. We must be able to identify an activity as a form of work and we have to be able to evaluate the specific performance. In so far as we are dealing with merit and desert, we are engaged in evaluations that encompass normative as well as epistemic aspects. Esteem is a gradual form of recognition whereas in the case of respect we think of it as a categorical attribution that does not depend on specific properties or accomplishments of a person. This at least holds true in the case of ‘recognition respect’ (Darwall 1977) we owe to all persons, “to have recognition respect for persons is to give proper weight to the fact that they are

persons” (Darwall 1977, 39). It has consequences for our actions; the class of eligible actions is restricted. To have recognition respect places restrictions on what is permissible for us to do (40). Under the heading of ‘appraisal respect’ Darwall presents a form of respect that consists of a positive appraisal of a person for their moral merits. Appraisal respect is based on the assessment of character traits, and with respect to this, it can be seen as a form of esteem, but it is a specific form of esteem: “[A]ppraisal respect for someone as a person is moral esteem: approbation for her as a moral agent.” (2006, 122) It is not because of our economic performance that we might win this moral esteem: “Appraisal respect is esteem that is merited or earned by conduct or character.” Yet even if we may be allowed to identify different degrees of appraisal esteem, the form of esteem we are looking for in the economic sphere is not that of moral esteem but of esteem for our contribution within social cooperation. Here we want to be appreciated not just for our moral excellence but for our instrumental value as someone who is doing a good job.

But even if recognition-esteem is marked by the instrumental nature of work and the comparative and competitive character of economic action, it is internally linked to the idea of recognition-respect. We do not arrive at a fair distribution of esteem in a case in which for the sake of racial or sexual discrimination the normative patterns of respect for a person do not work: performances cannot be made visible, they cannot be attributed to someone who is not socially visible as a person of respect (Lazzeri 2009). Recognition in the case of respect and rights means equal respect for everybody, not comparative evaluation or, hierarchical classification. In our society, it is seen as a violation of fundamental values if we accept discrimination at this level. But the problem of invisibility of work based on lacking respect for the working person as a person resulting from of racial, religious or sexual discrimination is not the whole story.

With respect to performance, we look for differentiation, and this is a normative expectation. We do not want to get the same compliments for everyone irrespective of her individual performance. In the case of esteem, we expect a valid cognitive basis of evaluation, because our recognition here refers to specific properties of a good or of a performance. This is not the case with love or with rights we think of as not directly emanating from true empirical judgments. We find disrespect therefore also in the form of systematic misinterpretations of performances. We expect our performance, our contribution to the good of others to be evaluated regardless of our personal background (Ikäheimo/Laitinen 2010). To identify a contribution to common work is not as trivial as it might seem at first glance. It is not trivial which activities we should count as labour and which not (Krebs 2002). There are more obvious modes of describing activities as work, such as in the case of producing visible and tangible goods, and more complex ones as in the case of service work, the result of which is neither tangible nor visible and that causes today serious debates even among professionals when they, for instance, try to identify the financial system’s value added to the overall economy (Haldane et al. 2010; Turner 2010). Today, it seems to be a serious problem that it is becoming more and more difficult to identify the concrete result of a specific activity, especially if—as we have seen

in the case of sophisticated financial products—even market-prices can be used only as a provisional evaluation that occasionally will be corrected by dramatic re-evaluations in the future.

When we look at the problems of differentiating the various forms of recognition, one might think that a clear-cut conceptual distinction between respect and esteem should be most appropriate. But this step of conceptual simplification would neglect the internal linkages between the different forms of recognition. Not only equal respect is a necessary condition for differentiating and qualifying esteem, the disesteem of certain forms of work must be seen as undermining the idea of equal respect we owe each other. Therefore, it appears to be more appropriate to speak of recognition-esteem or of recognition-respect instead of eliminating interconnected empirical and normative problems by conceptual fragmentation of our analytical frame. However, there remains one issue we will have to deal with in the following: Even if we focus on esteem instead of respect, we have to face an asymmetry of our normative argumentation: In so far as we refer to persons, we have to take into account that basic principles of respect may not be violated without drastic consequences for differentiating practices of recognition, too, and that it may be a crucial normative defect of economic institutions if they systematically violate the condition of dignity and moral respect of persons. In so far Ikäheimo/Laitinen (2010) are right when they insist that even in economic life, in which they are valued primarily as bearers of particular qualities and not as co-authors of shared norms, men cannot be treated merely as means.

4. Transparency of Cooperation and the Visibility of Work

In a seminal article, Axel Honneth (2010) offers a refined version of the idea of an internal relation between work and recognition that is not dealing with the debate on the teleological paradox. According to his reconstruction of central normative presuppositions of modern capitalist economy, the modern division of labour confronts us with two crucial normative questions concerning the normative integration of work. This normative perspective aims at questions that are traditionally discussed in the frame of distributive justice as well as in the frame of a morally sound social organization of work but gives them a specific twist. The claim that we have an unalienable right to earn our living based on the exercise of our personal labor force (this means a right to work and a right to be paid according to some minimal wage scheme) does not follow from an empirical analysis of the functioning of the economic institutions of capitalism but from the principles of normative justifiability of such a society. It refers to principles of dignity closely linked to the rights we have as members of a given society, not to specific aspects of work performance and work organization. This is why we do not need to develop a sophisticated analysis of work, production and economy. Questions of basic income or of minimum wages are directly linked to the status of a person as a member of society and should therefore not be

mingled with questions concerning the economic performance of a person: basic rights are basic because we do not need to reach a certain level of performance in order to have that right. The discourse of rights does not obey the same logic as the discourse of work, performance and deserts, and the internal problems of the Elster-problem do not arise here because we are not really in the sphere of recognition-esteem.

However, the normative justifiability of modern capitalist organization of work is not only a question of distribution of the outcome of the economic process. According to Axel Honneth, we are confronted with another crucial type of normative questions that refers to the social organization of work. Not the distribution of the fruits of collective labor is at stake here but the very question of repartition of the different tasks within a collective project and of the evaluation of the respective contributions to the collective result. The question of social organization of work is not only about fair distribution of work (work seen as a form of 'disutility') but about coordination of work in such a way that the individual work can be seen as a relevant contribution to the overall work necessary for the reproduction of a given society. Therefore, it is not only a question of fairness but also of the meaningful character of work, and this meaningful character is neither a quality of the specific character of work isolated from its social context nor just the character of social necessity in an objective sense, the basis of meaningfulness of work consists of the practical experience of cooperation and of contributing to a common endeavor. Here, we cannot be sure to be beyond the scope of Elster's paradox and the intricate problems of an economy of esteem.

Under the conditions of the modern division of labor and of a functionally differentiated society, it is not immediately clear which concrete activity is to be described as labor and which is not. The difference between labor and hobby, training, sport or a friendly turn cannot be deciphered just by looking at the physical aspects of behavior. In order to be able to interpret something as a working activity, we must be able to understand the social frame of that behavior. And often it is difficult for an outsider to 'see' the specific contribution of an activity to the fabrication of a specific good. At the level of work organization, visibility is an intricate question. We want to see our contribution, we want it to be seen by others and we want to be acknowledged for our contribution to a cooperative endeavor. We want to be recognized as somebody who is doing a good job in terms of competence and professionalism, who is contributing in a significant way to a material product or to a result of common importance. Social cooperation is important not only for economic life, it serves at the same time as a basis for recognition in the sense of social esteem. According to Honneth, there are some crucial normative principles built into the very structure of social cooperation which may serve as a normative basis for immanent criticism of the capitalist organization of the economic sphere. Starting from this thesis of an internal relation between empirical and normative aspects of cooperative work, I will discuss Honneth's normative claim for visibility and transparency of work organization.

As we know from Adam Smith, Marx, Spencer and Durkheim, the economic superiority of the modern (i.e. functionally differentiated) capitalist type of society is characterized by a highly developed division of labor. This, however, immediately leads to the question of how the parts will fit together, to the problem of integrating all the partial activities. We may distinguish two basic forms: coordination *ex ante* via intentional practice—centralized planning or on a lower scale decentralized cooperation of individual actors—, and *ex post* coordination that takes a non-intentional form—coordination via markets. Even if we assume that market practices are based on intentional action, the specific form and the concrete results of market coordination do not result from some conscious intentionality. Otherwise the epistemic superiority of market coordination stressed by Mises (1990) and Hayek (1950) would disappear.

The very idea of cooperation is based on a picture in which a broad range of practical activities is combined in a process which leads to the production of a specific good. Even the more abstract idea of cooperation which hints at a more formal collective goal or *telos* of joint activity remains very close to the model of producing material goods. If we take a look at the domain of service work, it is not immediately evident what the output of a specific service activity is (Jany-Catrice 2010). We are facing a situation in which it is difficult to distinguish between the process of producing a service and its results, such as in the case of schools, hospitals or consultancy work. Services do not deliver a proper product, usually they do not bring into existence a visible thing, they do not result in something that is durable and stackable and are often seen as being not really productive, especially in the case of personal services and domestic work as these are traditionally performed by women within the household. Axel Honneth's diagnosis, too, is that of a deficit of recognition in the realm of services. This deficit has different causes and origins, from the invisibility of work and the invisibility of the result of work to cultural patterns like the dissolution of a normative culture of service. How can the value of service activities be made visible? Is it possible to refer to the value of service activities as indicated by their relative prices? At least for some services, this would not solve the problem, especially in the case of poorly paid domestic services.

Visibility of work has a lot of facets. Sometimes this has to do with the legal status of the workers in the 'informal' sector of economy. Here we are often confronted with situations in which legal restraints with respect to immigrant work make it necessary for people to develop strategies of invisibility. On the other hand, in the classical sectors, the control of 'zones of uncertainty' (Crozier 1964) is a critical resource of power and influence, and this constitutes a good reason for employees to resist the efforts of management to make their work visible to others and to make processes transparent. In so far, transparency is regarded as an instrument of management control and as a sign of very limited trust. In order to defend their professional status and autonomy, employees want to keep control of their specific knowledge. The capability to make one's working procedures invisible to others can be a source of recognition: we are in control of the process, we are the ones that really show professional competence. If processes are rendered visible and transparent, they are transformed

into objects of external control. And if consultancy firms propagate ideas such as ‘deconstructing’ traditional value chains, they are doing so with reference to the idea of optimizing transparency and thus to improve management control and efficiency. This type of politics of visibility can cause serious problems with respect to micro-politics of work. From the perspective of social research on labor and the practical accomplishment of work, there are serious doubts on whether the idea of radical transparency can really be successfully implemented. Work cannot be reduced to its visible traits that can be objectified and specified in a formal manner as an object of explicit knowledge (Voirol 2005a; Porschen/Bolte 2005). In using objectifying procedures to render work visible, the subjective meaning and the concrete experience of work cannot really be grasped, and this problem becomes even more intricate when we look at service work that is based on intersubjective communication between the service provider and the client or customer (Dejours 2003; Voswinkel 2005; Dunkel/Weyrich 2010).

There is a lot of work which remains invisible and unseen, and where this fact is perceived as a form of misrecognition. Here I have in mind ‘drudgery’-work like cleaning or garbage removing, the work of janitors or of chamber maids. This type of work is visible at least in principle, but we (the customers) do not want to see it or have developed strategies to ignore it (and to ignore the people performing those tasks). Of course, there are other forms of work which normally remain invisible without any stigmatizing effects. There are jobs in the back office, in planning and construction offices, which usually are out of sight for customers. And there are forms of work that remain invisible because visibility would conflict with professional norms of performance: it is a characteristic feature of certain caring and nursing services, especially for adults or for elderly, that they are performed in a way in which the service worker, the specific service or certain traits of the work remain invisible, because they have a certain character of intimacy, and are sometimes associated with a feeling of shame or appear to undermine the public staging of the care-takers as autonomous actors in the full sense. Even if there are huge differences with respect to work and social prestige between a nurse and a butler, one thing that they have in common is that their work encompasses elements of intimacy and confidentiality that we do not want to be made public. There are other forms of work in which we observe a somehow paradoxical (or should we say: perverse) form of invisibility—as in the famous case of the normatively expected positive emotions of a stewardess—which should not be performed in such a way that the smile is perceived by the customer as resulting from ‘emotional work’. And there are a lot of services we do not want to be visible because they become overtly visible only when they are not performed in an appropriate way or where the service is exercised only in the case of crisis—such as the work of a fire brigade or of emergency rescue services.

There are aspects of work that are more easily rendered visible than others. This has consequences for the perception of performance and for social feedback. Activities based on tacit knowledge or on a very sophisticated professional competence cannot easily be made transparent to the public. The public, the customers or the clients can perhaps see a lot of physical action without being

able to see whether the surgeon, the plant operator or the software engineer is doing a good job. There are things like ‘articulation work’ or ‘psychotherapy’ that consist of activities that do not fit the traditional understanding of work very well. Knowledge work is an example for a form of work which cannot easily be rendered visible to people who do not share the relevant corpus of knowledge and knowledge-based competences. Things become even more complicated in cases in which we have to do with knowledge of the other actor’s knowledge (or other peoples’ lack of knowledge).

In the domain of finance and banking, we are confronted with this type of reflexivity. Visibility here refers to the fact that certain things are not visible to others. Market efficiency is a (very problematic) idea about visibility as an effect of market mechanisms, but the language of prices creates transparency at the cost of establishing a closed world of finance operations in which the external world is merely represented in terms of price signals. Market transparency means access to information and efficient markets are thought of as fully reflecting this information in such a way that traders need no additional source of information. If the world is fully reflected in the flow of market prices, then a trader will need a window to the outside world only for his very personal exit option.

Of course, there are sociologists who insist that prices do not fully reflect the reality of motives and are unable to provide orientation for action (Langenohl 2010), but the economic narrative explains us that price signals are sufficient to make markets function in the way they are expected to (Hayek 1945). Economists are dealing with information in terms of costs, and the opportunity costs of information do not only consist of the price we have to pay for it, but also of the opportunities lost while searching for information and interpreting it. Everything has to be transparent but there is no one left who is really looking at the facts. There is no subject of transparency. Everything is visible but nobody looks at it. This is the very idea of markets as epistemic arrangements. If we have efficient markets, there is no reason why we should leave Plato’s allegoric cave—we must only look at the prices on the wall-screen.

Honneth’s normative proposition relies on the idea of generalized visibility. Recognition somehow presupposes that persons are visible, free of fear and that their mutual relations are transparent. However, exactly this normative claim for visibility and full transparency is challenged by authors like Michel Foucault (1975). In his model of panoptism, transparency and visibility are mechanisms of power and domination. The step from the chthonic cave to the iron cage does not necessarily mean moral progress. But instead of claiming the position of a referee in this normative antagonism, I will discuss some of the prerequisites of social visibility and argue that the ‘struggles for visibility’ (Voirol 2005b) are to be conceived of as struggles on visibility.

Service work can be invisible for very different reasons. There are cultures of discretion, and there are offensive practices of not seeing the work of concrete persons. But what is the basis of pride and of social recognition in the case of service work if there is no tangible and visible product? Very often, the specific contribution of an individual performance cannot be identified without referring to established standards and conventions that are eroding under conditions of

new flexible forms of work organization. Therefore, the visibility of specific contributions to the total work needs frames and conventions such as normative and epistemic schemes. We are not speaking here about the visibility of a person as someone who deserves respect as a human being or as a member of a political community, we are not speaking about the recognition of the cultural identity of persons or groups—we speak about the visibility of specific activities here, that must not necessarily be regarded as being constitutive of a concrete person in a normative sense.

Nevertheless, if we have the impression that our contribution to the community, in which we live, is not adequately registered, not fully acknowledged, this appears to deny the worth of our participation in this community. And in so far as man is conceived as the owner of his own person, it will cause serious problems for him if “the labor of his body and the work of his hands” (Locke 2003, 111), that is thought of as constituting property, remains invisible. Yet, the demand for visibility of our own contribution to a common good does not mean that we want to be transparent, that we and our performance should be made visible without our consent or without our knowledge. If transparency means that we are passive objects of supervision and control, then we and our performance are objectified without being able to influence the way in which our performance is made visible and presented to the public.

The question here is not about being visible or not, it is about playing an active part in negotiating how and when one is visible. Sometimes, we do not want to be visible if we are looking for discretion or if we want to defend some important zones of uncertainty which may be crucial resources of social influence and power. Under certain circumstances, it may belong to the professional self-understanding of highly esteemed service work—such as in the traditional case of a chamberlain or a butler in an aristocratic household—not to be seen (in social not in physical terms). And it may be part of the working arrangement between the care-giver and the care-receiver not to make public certain very intimate aspects of caring and not to describe caring as a ‘service’. But more critical in normative terms are practices of ignoring the actual and ongoing delivery of service activities. This is the case when people are ‘looking through’ the person who is performing services, when people do not socially acknowledge the person performing a service and the service work and its results as well.

The crucial aspect here is that we are not in the position to decide whether we want our work to be seen or not. This is the point in all the complaints about disrespect based on ignorance and non-perception. The problem does not lie in the fact of being seen or not but in the denial of active participation in the decision process on visibility and visualization. The problems of transparency and visibility affect not only the service agent, but also the customers, the organization and the public.

And here we have to acknowledge a difference between the visibility issue at the level of respect and the level of esteem. At least, we should be careful in transferring legitimate claims for visibility from the sphere of respect to the sphere of esteem. We expect respect as a person, but usually not as somebody who performs a specific task. Even if we fulfill a social function of high impor-

tance, this does not imply that we may expect respect for this function; we may expect esteem if we succeeded in fulfilling the function in a competent manner. And even if someone did not succeed, this is no reason (no normative argument) to deny basic respect for this person. Only if we feel that a lack of respect is the reason for an unfair evaluation of our performance or if a critical assessment of our work performance leads to a denial of basic respect, we are confronted with a direct moral fusion of questions of esteem and of respect. But even in such cases, we have to take into account the structural difference between equal respect and qualifying esteem. On this basis, we may observe constellations in which a disesteem of performances may constitute a form of disrespect of a person or in which a lack of respect of a person or a specific group is the reason for structural barriers to a fair estimation of their work. They may take the form of a depreciating recognition as in the case of devaluation, of disqualification or of stigmatization (Renault 2007, 201), where people are respected only in a defective way and where their performance is not fairly assessed.

Another type of misrecognition consists of “the racial invisibility of blacks, the gendered invisibility of domestic work, or the social invisibility of industrial workers” (202). Yet, the problem here is not that of invisibility per se which might be cured by strategies of ‘making visible’. According to Renault, misrecognition exists not only in the form of invisibility, but also in the form of ‘over-visibility’, through which a black man is reduced to being nothing but a black. In this case we can observe how qualifying descriptions function as a denial of respect, and how this denial of respect leads to misrecognition with respect to performance, merit and deserts.

5. Conventions, Normative Reconstruction and Immanent Critique

Even if markets are not institutions designed for recognizing persons as co-authors of shared norms, they do not function in a norm-free way. They are not merely based on a spirit of competition and selfishness without any shared norms and standards. They, too, require common norms and standards and to some extent even shared goals and some forms of mutual recognition, such as property rights or a common currency. They need a cultural and normative interpretative framework, they rely on “unwritten, inexplicit norms and rules that implicitly determine—before any market-mediated transaction takes place—how the values of certain goods is to be estimated and what should be legitimately respected in the exchange” (Honneth 2010, 232).

In the modern division of labor, it is often very difficult to see how a concrete activity contributes to a common endeavor. In a bank, for instance, we may find highly differentiated departments. Trade, settlement, controlling or risk management—they all develop their own picture of the overall process of banking activities (Kocyba 2010a; 2010b). If we ask for the process of value creation, we can get a broad variety of answers. Adding value by adding labor does no longer give an adequate picture of value creation. Interactive work, co-production,

the assignment of value activities to value results, the value-effects of collective problem solving, of negotiation on what the problem consists of, all this cannot easily be described in terms of a sequence of technically separate value activities. If we want to make visible the process of value creation, we have to rely on agreements or conventions as negotiated compromises.

Mathematical tools like the Black-Scholes-Formula (or other instruments of asset pricing) and similar innovations such as securitization or loan syndication serve as a frame of conventions that enables financial transactions which otherwise would lack calculability and feasibility. Mathematical formulae play an important role in the practice of finance, even if we think that option traders “never used the Black-Scholes-Merton Option Pricing Formula” (Haug/Taleb 2009). Conventions may be the result of legal prescriptions, as in the case of minutes of consultation, they may go back to new possibilities of information processing, to new mathematical instruments, to new customer expectations and so on. They may be analyzed as institutions and status functions in the sense of John Searle (Chiapello 2010) or as conventions in the sense of Hume and Lewis (Salais 2007). They all shape, and in many cases enable, financial transactions. What they have in common is their role as conventions that make certain games possible. Financial products cannot be managed or even described without referring to conventions. Conventions and institutions do not only function as cognitive devices that make things visible, they establish a performative type of visibility that enables new types of economic transactions.

One important role of conventions consists of defining which activity counts as work and which work is adding value in generating use-value for a customer. Yet, satisfying the needs of the customer and delivering a good work performance does not necessarily create additional value. There must be some agreement that those service activities are to be paid, that they are an essential part of the service product. But there are situations in which there is no such agreement on whether a specific activity is a crucial part of the work task or an idiosyncratic add-on. Certain service features can be seen as constitutive of success on a specific market, as a tool to reduce price sensitivity of the clients and therefore as an instrument to generate additional profits for the company, whereas from another point of view the same activity can be described as selling a high-level service below cost. If we say with Deranty (2010) that the prices markets put on products reflect the social value society attaches to them and that work has to be recognized as socially valid and as producing socially validated products, then recognition is to be interpreted as co-constitutive of economic action.

Recognition then serves a twofold function: it serves as an institutional frame for the functioning of market processes but is present at the level of the formation of preferences, too. Here we can rely on the work of economic theorists like Akerlof and Kranton (2010), who, under the heading of ‘identity economics’, try to show how preferences of economic actors reflect social codes, or like Brennan and Eusepi (2009), who describe values as preferences and thus as products of social conventions in such a way that they appear more like beliefs than as desires or mere tastes. In this case recognition-based economy becomes a process in which norms and values play an important role and in which disputes

or even deliberation on preferences may arise among the actors. Nevertheless, not all normative presuppositions of economy are to be seen as being moral in nature in such a way that they may serve as a basis for social critique (Honneth 2010, 236). And if there are economic activities that cannot be fulfilled without establishing visibility and accountability, it still needs to be examined whether the constitutive role of visibility establishes normative criteria of critical analysis.

If Honneth refers to Hegel's idea that

“the reciprocal exchange of services demands that each individual societal activity embody a sufficiently complex and visible display of skills to prove worthy for the universal recognition linked to ‘self-respect’” (Honneth 2010, 231),

it is clearly a normative conception he draws upon. Yet, the way in which this idea is spelled out shows that the alleged moral necessity seems to be a functional one: “if market-mediated relations of work are to fulfill the function of social integration, they must satisfy the demand that individual activities be related to each other in a way that is as transparent and clearly arranged as possible.” (Honneth 2010, 235)

According to Honneth, transparency and visibility of work are indispensable for social integration. His functional analysis does not explicate whether it aims at visibility for the worker himself or at visibility for others such as clients or colleagues or for the public in general. Yet, it is not exactly the same problem I have when I think that others do not adequately perceive relevant aspects of my work or whether I am not able to have an adequate picture of my contribution to the process of social cooperation. Drawing on Durkheim, Honneth explicates

“that the new relations of work can only generate ‘organic’ forms of solidarity if all workers can experience them as common, cooperative effort in the common interest. In order to fulfill this condition, he [Durkheim; H. K.] claims that the cooperative connection between one's own activity and that of one's fellow workers must be clearly visible from the perspective of each individual job.” (Honneth 2010, 235)

Here, the claim for visibility does not mean that we want to be seen by others, but that we are able to fairly assess our own activities and to identify what makes them meaningful as a contribution to the cooperative production of a common good. The normative scope of this argument depends on how we interpret ‘socially necessary work activities’ and the ‘contribution to the common good’. Is it to be read simply in the sense of contributing to the good of others, or do we have to understand it in the more demanding sense of contributing to cooperative ends or to the common good? Is it necessary that contributions are a result of intrinsic or non-instrumental motives in order to be worthy of esteem (Ikäheimo/Laitinen 2010)? What are “socially necessary work activities” (Honneth 2010, 229)—are they activities whose results meet the needs of others and can therefore be traded as a commodity, or do we have to consider them as

activities that are internally directed to a common good and therefore are to be analyzed in a vocabulary of gratitude and gift? Here, the formulations used by Honneth leave space for further elaboration.

Within the frame of Honneth's conception of normative reconstruction, only those principles that are built into the structure of social collaboration can serve as sources of critique. In order to correct social pathologies, Honneth is interested in principles that are institutionalized in our society and do not come from an external perspective. Guided by Hegel, Dewey and Durkheim he identifies two constitutive claims: minimum wages and—following the ideal of a division of labor in which each individual is able to see how his or her actions are affecting, and being affected by those of others—fairness and transparency of the social division of labor. This represents a functionally necessary presupposition of a market-mediated division of labor; the cooperation of working activities must be transparent, the cooperative connection of every single contribution must be clearly visible from the perspective of each individual job. The demand for meaningful work constitutes a normative entitlement.

The claim for full transparency and clear visibility appears too strong and is, as we have seen in the discussion of 'visibility', quite an ambiguous claim. If we allow empirical analysis to make proposals for normative reasoning, we could perhaps say that the claim to actively take part in negotiating how, when and in which sense work activities should be made visible or invisible, would be more appropriate—at least in the sense that is in line with the modern idea of autonomy institutionalized in our society. This is no universal claim for visibility, but instead an enhanced right to self-determination, a right to limit visualizing control, and the right to make our work performance visible according to our own criteria and to have access to the way in which our performance is registered by others, especially by organizations and companies. At the same time, we may fight for transparency if we want to gain insights about social organizations or decision-making practices that affect our social and personal life in a relevant way. But even here, we cannot be sure whether 'perfect transparency' will not paradoxically lead to new forms of invisibility (cf. Vogelmann 2010).

Honneth's perspective of social criticism as a normative reconstruction of existing institutionalizations of freedom implies that critique has to rely on existing institutions and that only internal critique is a legitimate form of critique. According to Honneth, the criteria of normative critique and the basis of justifiable moral norms and values have to be found in the constitutive patterns of recognition on which the social process of exchange is based. The institutionalized idea to regard our work as a contribution in the overall context of social cooperation implies normative claims that point to the design of the workplace and the working environment. But what exactly does it mean that norms of cooperation or of exchange are institutionalized? For Honneth (2010, 234), this does not necessarily mean that those principles are governing the actual processes in a given society. Instead, Honneth speaks of a "counterfactual basis of validity of capitalist organization of work" that remains valid even if the constitutive and functionally necessary norms are "invalidated in practice". But in which sense can they be valid and invalidated at the same time? Honneth points

to an answer: the capitalist organization of work must be described through the normative traits that make up its public justifiability. But then, the program of normative reconstruction as social analysis is in danger to argue in a circular manner or to identify institutionalized norms with the semantics of public discourse.

Can we explain the status of constitutive principles that are regularly suspended in real action in analogy to the role of grammar in linguistic analysis? Even if most utterances are incorrect with respect to syntactic norms, this would not invalidate those norms *as norms*. But it seems to be a strange paradigm of critique. It leads to questions of the social role of such normative patterns. If certain norms a given society permanently appeals to are systematically violated, this may lead to a new perspective on those norms. If we think that appealing to these norms helps to perpetuate a social order we intend to criticize with the help of those norms, then this will cause irritations and perhaps we should not exclude in an a priori manner that there could—in case of a radical long-term counterfactual—be something wrong with these norms, or at least with the way in which they are institutionalized.

Here we come to the question of normative innovation—or should we say progress? Should we restrict our normative critique to arguments referring to socially well established norms? Is there no legitimate critique except for immanent critique rooted in socially embedded and institutionalized norms? Does the very idea of recognition necessarily lead to limiting critical theory to a critique in the name of already validated norms? This depends on how we understand immanent critique. If we articulate critical arguments we think of as universal, we will have to learn that we implicitly refer to norms and values institutionalized in just the societal order we erroneously believe to criticize from without by referring to—as we believe—strictly universalistic arguments. Immanent critique in this sense must not mean that we voluntarily restrict our criticism by drawing exclusively on arguments for which it is possible to demonstrate that their normative content is already institutionalized in the society we would like to criticize.

Why should we restrict our critique to the argument that society has only partially and selectively implemented the norms and values its normative justification refers to? Instead, we may arrive at the historical insight that even those normative claims which we think of as universalistic in a strong sense—as not just articulating the normative self-stylization of a specific historical society—may prove to be shaped by characteristic traits of a specific culture. In this sense, immanent critique always is an expression of historical reflexivity, not a way to determine how we criticize social injustice and human suffering.

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