THE "RECOGNITION TURN" IN CRITICAL THEORY AS A COMMUNICATION THEORY FOR PEACE

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Abstract

The theory of communicative action is less associated with the idea of peace than with the cultivation of infrastructures for democratic interaction on the model of reasoned reciprocity. The theory is also marked by reflexive and historical attention to its distance from practice, thereby associating the theory with the critical diagnosis of the age. Such associations invite an action perspective on peace as a critical project oriented toward reasoned discourse. The paper explores the contributions of the theory of communicative action by taking one of its fundamental assumptions as a starting point: the recurring theme of mutual recognition. By exploring extensions of this theme into articulations of democratic and rational discourse, the paper offers mutual recognition as a basis for the theory as a communicative idea of peace for the continuation and development of peace studies.

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19 javnost-the public Vol.14 (2007), No. 4, pp. 19 - 36

…communicative forms of life [are] interwoven with relations of reciprocal recognition.
Habermas 1998, 40

9/11 made painfully clear [that] struggles over religion, nationality, and gender are now interimbricated in ways that make the question of recognition impossible to ignore.
Fraser and Honneth, 2003, 2

Critical-Theoretical analyses hinge on diagnoses of the "situation of the age" (Habermas 1984a). They recursively mark the history of Critical Theory as a series of reflexive stock-takings that reconstruct theory and invite controversies, including within "peace studies," "peace research," and similar academic extensions of the effort. For example, the *Journal of Peace Research* looked toward this century with the essay, "The Challenge of Critical Theories: Peace Research at the Start of the New Century" (Patomäki 2001). How to orient critical research is by now an issue for peace studies, communication studies, and other fields where attention to the human condition brings political-economic dimensions of domination up against the psychological and the social.

Aiming to change praxis in light of emancipatory theory, "the critical project" witnessed emancipatory movements since World War II falter into the next century, along the way spurring reconstructed explanations of domination and emancipation beyond the production paradigm into psychological, cultural, and intersubjective realms. Gouldner's *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970) had caught the deepening skepticism that "enlightenment, education or propaganda" could ever tap emancipatory impulses in the relation of economy to life circumstances: "reform of the existential plight" (Bauman 1999, 86) would refocus Critical Theory, with lifeworld-system frameworks redirecting analyses to bring communication theory into "reconstructions of historical materialism" (Habermas 1975b) that grasped the systematic suppression of lifeworlds. These frameworks looked *inside* human experience. Marcuse (1955) saw the pleasure principle as a source of naturally-recurring breaks with the social order, while Castoriadis (1987) stressed autonomy as an inevitable human impulse. Inheritors of these reconstructions offer critical-developmental psychologies as (inter)subjectivist attempts "to find a social guarantor" to surmount "the given social order" (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 241-242). Any such effort was always reflexively tempered with suspicion about claims to emancipatory potential, while Critical Theory stressed negation without assurances (Adorno 1973). Habermas' communicative turn (1984b, 1987) sought a way out of the impasse, with a decisive revision that marks more than a generation's work. Joined to communicative and discursive theories of action were American pragmatic conceptions and Continental "desire-theoretical considerations" in a reframing of *emancipation as creative action* (see Joas 1996). Creative action might overthrow "old boundaries" to supply "structures of meaning that always point beyond the given social order and values" (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 241).

The communication theory of society aimed for nothing less than to institutionalise *interaction as consequential critical discourse*. Its analyses described an ever-present surplus of (unacknowledged) rational action that encouraged attention to the

normative content of social interaction as both inevitability and theory-trajectory (Cooke 1998). Research outside the orb of Frankfurt Critical Theory offered genealogical insights highlighting not only domination, but also emancipatory impulses in experiences capable of recognising and overturning the rules by which society is ordered (e.g., Foucault). A key insight was that the dominant order is incapable of preventing a subject seeing herself within the order of things (Butler 1997). As subjugated subjects reflexively decode power, unruly action lies in wait at the gates of order. In a line from Castoriadis and Marcuse to Foucault, the human psyche propels itself "against the unreasonable demands of society": social order and subversion breed "a practice of transgression," an inflection of emancipation (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 243). Such analyses and hopes set the stage for considerations of the human subject and the intersubjective subject through *the idea of mutual recognition* (Honneth 1996; Honneth *et al*. 2007). The communication turn in Critical Theory moves into its "recognition turn."

The recognition turn sees emancipatory actors in everyday life with resources already at their disposal, yet struggling for recognition. Theirs is the universally shared resource of the vernacular-in-conversation. Recognition, "a key word of our time," marks "struggles over identity and difference," from "indigenous land claims" to "women's carework, homosexual marriage or Muslim headscarves" (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 1). "Mutual recognition" has acquired the status of a norm for a world that suppresses it. Thus Honneth's *The Struggle for Recognition* (1996) echoes with its title Hegel's famous phrase. Its redefinitions for Critical Theory bring resistance informed by Marx's "materialist turn," echoed in the Fraser-Honneth debate, *Redistribution or Recognition?* (2003). This debate is instructive for peace studies when facing the question whether continuation and extension of the communicative turn in Critical Theory makes sense for the age.

Intimations of Mutual Recognition in Peace Studies

References to "recognition" and "mutual recognition" in the literature of peace are part of a larger, apparently more pressing effort to bring critical perspectives into epistemic communities concerned with peace. Recalling the familiar contrast of "traditional" to "critical theory," Krause and Williams write of the burden to shed those aspects which have "an unfortunate tendency to foreclose debate between scholars taking critical … approaches" (1996, 229). The task is at least a fifteen-year effort to move away from "security studies," according to the inaugural issue of *International Studies Quarterly* (Walt 1991). Similar reports of about the hegemony of traditional research are enclaved within "international relations," "peace studies," and other mixtures that identify "peace" with "security communities," "security studies," and variants of "integration" in the range from the local to the regional to the global. Substantively expressed, the traditional/critical research debate produces, e.g., the question, "Regional fortresses or global integration?" (Bellamy 2004). Such questions describe the morphology of critical research in peace studies as a co-opted practice.

Where peace studies is left-oriented "peace research," it also faces attack. The situation is expressed by Patomäki (2001, 724): "Why has peace research been singled out and many peace research institutes attacked, reorganised or even closed? Why do many critically minded academic researchers opt for philosophy, International

Relations or Global Political Economy rather than peace research?" His questions call for reasons that "peace research is simply not developing" (p. 725).

Those reasons probably stem from relationships between already-held power in the world and the persistence of anonymising theory-systems in the social and political sciences. They tended to pull analyses into "the mainstream ideologies of the West," so that, after the Cold War, "peace [was] breaking out" primarily "on Western terms" (p. 725). The collapsed Berlin wall became an image serving globalising capitalism, while in the academy the Hegelian-Marxist tradition was hijacked (as by Fukuyama) "to justify this dominance by adapting Hegel's argument about the end of history." Patomäki proclaimed critical peace research "very much needed at the beginning of the new century," but cautioned that "the critical" intellectually and practically had become seriously co-opted: "research institutes have withdrawn to the traditional mainstream research of International Relations" (pp. 725-726).

This is a story familiar to critical communication scholars. (Re)interpretations of the "the critical" came to reflect rather than critically engage prevailing paradigms in research and their professional applications. It plays out, for example, in the collapse of the public sphere concept into "public relations" training, complete with managerial views that domesticate critical perspectives. As theory and philosophy, Critical Theory has several decades' worth of analyses explaining how positivism continues to survive *Methodenstreiten* of the sort replayed in a range of academic fields, including peace studies. Just as communication studies once had its "ferment" (*Ferment in the Field*) without a level political and conceptual playing field, its revisitations (*Future of the Field I*; *Future of the Feld II*) grew increasingly comfortable with the normalisation and domestication of Critical Theory.

Debates focused on critical studies of peace include attacks on postmodernism (Østerud 1996), where charges of trivialising "the critical" reveal realism's ideological character (Patomäki 1997). Defenses of positivism accompany charges of falling into pre-critical orientations for peace studies (Smith 1997), and mark aims to redefine its work by including "theoretical ideas [that take] into account the methodological and ethico-political lessons learned in past decades." The last effort (Galtung 1987) to actually develop "critical ideals and [a] methodology of peace research" (Patomäki 2001, 725-726) nevertheless left theory-addressees at the gate of nameless and faceless citizen-subjects. Facing the task of constructing addressees anew, peace researchers found agency in the mutuality of actors as a new generation of peace researchers began to explore dialogic conceptions for the peace project. "Mutual recognition" bore labels reminiscent of the theory of communicative action, that communicational turn in Critical Theory linking the model of the conversation to democratic practices for the critical-emancipatory project.

As peace research struggles to regenerate itself, its conceptual horizons appear to call for a marriage of methodology with emancipatory theories on moral/ethical grounds. The literature of peace research thus includes efforts to read the background understandings of those who await their articulation in communication and into discourse. Here, peace research moves into the idea of mutual recognition, if only as recognition of subject-locations within the social order. As the recognition of domination, critical peace research highlights the human subject with the aim to reconstruct infrastructures of peaceful public discourse, discussion and debate, with the hope that the *mis*-recognised can assert their positions in a "field of competing discourses" (Patomäki 2001, 732).

Even with that aim in mind, a liberal-competitive give-and-take falls short of a deeper exploration of mutuality and its possibilities in interaction. The idea of "mutual recognition" aims to pluralise communicative action. For the intellectual history of Critical Theory and of peace research, this aim invites (re)discovery of the meaning of "mutual recognition."

The Idea of Mutual Recognition

In the first chapter of *Capital*, Marx gave Hegel's concept of recognition a footnote: "It is with man as with commodities," who "comes into the world" but "sees and recognises himself in other men." Thereafter he "establishes his own identity as a man by first comparing himself" with the Other (Marx 1967, Ch. 1, note 19). The struggle for recognition sometimes appeared as a direct struggle, as in Hegel's master-slave relation. Elsewhere, mediating elements of the struggle appear as interactions among tools, language, property, the State. Yet reconciled struggles are for Hegel *the illusion of communication*, leaving for others a reinterpretation project that takes the interaction of recognition into discourses of peace and political/moral philosophy. Butler (2003) reconsiders this undeveloped legacy, demonstrating that Hegel has been misread far too long on the score of recognition. She cites Siep (1980, 217-228) in support of the claim that the struggle for recognition is the ironic exercise of an individual's emancipation from "the cultural order." She points to the *System of Ethical Life* (1979), where Hegel regards the struggle for recognition *not*, per usual interpretations, as the pursuit of property or personal honor, but as a family affair of integrity. The struggle is enacted within the family as a struggle between members who must reconcile their individual wills with the exigencies of collective family life, but also as a struggle between distinct families for recognition.

Nowhere does the *individual* possess the characteristics of a distinct entity. This subject is instead and everywhere a mutual partner in the construction of collective identity. Even though Hegel wrote of the struggle for recognition as though we should imagine self-interest (to acquire property, e.g.), Butler shows that "it is not the individual who seeks recognition of his own interests, but, rather, a set of individuals who seek to find recognition for their common identity": even Hegel's discussion of absolute freedom "calls for the surpassing of individual wills." The struggle for recognition should therefore be seen as a concept meant to articulate "an ethical community based on nonartificial, i.e., natural, ties" (Butler 2003, 88). It should also be understood as the search for "a prior unifying ground which remains concealed throughout the struggle itself," as a "*struggle for a community*" based on "*principles of reciprocal recognition*" (pp. 88-89, emphases added).

Honneth (1996), too, observes that intersubjective conflict is not abandoned in Hegel's mature philosophical system. Such conflict defines a critical medium of philosophy's formative process. Any oppositions are explained via mediation. Additionally, the thought that the struggle for recognition is itself a medium of individuation and communicative competencies suggests the possibility of ever-maturing egos. Sometimes interaction is seen in turn as the mediator of products of labor, language, and property. Recognition even appears to serve as the initiator of labor, for example.

Yet no more than nine pages of Hegel's *System of Ethical Life* address the "struggle for recognition." There, "pure freedom" is found both in spontaneous collaboration and in mutual indifference. In nature there is a community unmediated by

media of property, etc. A "natural" activity is not something known, Hegel asserts. Knowledge of that activity comes only negatively by its having been taken away. We know interaction through its loss. Consequently, "The negating subject makes himself a cause" (Hegel 1979, part 2).

The idea of mutual recognition has more optimistic and enthusiastic sources in intellectual history, some of which regard neither mutuality nor recognition as a matter of struggle. In American philosophical pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, mutuality and recognition often appear as natural experiences, which once prompted a critique of the absence of power and drama in the theorising of symbolic experience (McLuskie 2006). In the wake of that critique, the idea of mutual recognition became a secular translation of spiritual themes in philosophy, not always attentive to possibilities for inheriting dogma. If uncritically pursued, proponents of "mutual recognition" can invest acts of expression and interaction alone with unwarranted certitude about the power of communication in society. Secularised ghosts of religious dogma as dogma characterise human interaction and expression as "nothing more than a communication of religion" (Duncan 1962, 104). Critical Theory instead focuses on "mutual recognition" as a *worldly* experience, regarding the democratic value of full participation as a *project* understood to be *at risk*. That is the inheritance, at any rate, of the theory of communication action.

Habermas (2001a) calls upon world religions to continue their contributions to freedom and democracy. He invokes *the secular power of mutual recognition* – described as early as von Humboldt's (1999) theory of conversation and language two centuries ago. "Mutual recognition" describes dynamics of participation in a range from conversation to discursive contestation. Rather than annihilate religion via secular inflections (Habermas 2002), the secular translation opens onto an inclusive sphere that democratises values from a variety of social and cultural sources. Without such translation practices, "the West will either appear simply as another crusader on the behalf of a competing religious faith, like the Arab world, or as the travelling salesman of an instrumental reason that subjects all meaning to itself" (Habermas 2001a).

The contours and contents of communicative interactions are not, then, dogmatically or otherwise uncritically provided in advance, and certainly not by some to the exclusion of many. The theory of communicative action instead foregrounds processes and procedures. It incorporates elements of the therapeutic dialogue emphasising emancipatory breakthroughs on the model of freely given consent to interpreted histories. Since the 1970s, Critical Theory challenged us to uncover a series of "communicative turns" buried within modernity's increasingly differentiating and diffusing positivistic disciplines (Habermas 1971). For the academically institutionalised field of communication, this challenge met the dominance of research-to-practice behaviorisms that still continue to confuse "communication" with "control." Communication as mutual recognition can lose its way into control theories and practices that recognise just enough to create more effective domination practices. That is why peace research has "discovered" the older idea of interests (Patomäki 2001).

When Habermas read knowledge as a story of "knowledge-guiding" or "knowledge-constituting" interests, he could have been diagnosing a field called "communication" or "peace studies" that had succumbed to a technical rendition of practical interests, another occasion to articulate an overriding, emancipatory

interest in knowing. The idea of knowledge beset by interests described histories that create and reflect differentiations and discrepancies in distributions of power, including opportunities for interaction and communication. An *oeuvre* had been set to interrogate the presuppositions of communication with specific attention to the interest in freedom. Hegel and von Humboldt had addressed a complex of knowledge interests that, in hindsight, can be summarised as technical interests enacted purposive-rationally, enjoying empirical prevalence thanks to their connections to the "colonising" of the lifeworld.

The lifeworld, that social-cultural incubator of identity, reciprocity, and interplays of self with other, endures systematic frustrations in the cultivation of what might be called *recognition practices*. The suppression of these practices draws – or should draw – attention to an as-yet unrealised, counterfactual ideal of a society that attempts to organise itself through mutual recognition. Hegel and von Humboldt in quite different ways saw that as, respectively, a struggle and an inevitably creative act already practiced in the lifeworld. The thesis of lifeworld colonisation found one of its earliest expressions as *systematically distorted communication* as the counterfactual condition of mutual recognition.

Hegel's view was born in a critique of romanticising language-in-action. Von Humboldt's critique of scientism and formalism resulted in an analysis of language that anchored expressive practices in the linguisticality of lifeworld necessities. Both offered the first "communicative turns" as perspectives on society from within philosophy, anticipating the project of a social theory grounded in communicative. Like other developments in the history of ideas, authors' revisions frequently eclipsed earlier concepts, but the idea of mutual recognition became a way to understand history as a world-historical struggle, an alternative today to technologised thinking about "communication" before the academy ever got the idea to have a field or discipline called "communication."

Conceptions leading to the theory of communicative action are diagnoses of our age drawn from earlier times, seen now in rear-view mirrors that reflect striking anonymisations of the lifeworld and, with it, the anonymisation of communication down to its definitions. Thus the theory of communicative action does not speak in support of the administrative history of communication research as it is known today, but in support of alternative theories that "involve shared presuppositions" on behalf of "communicative forms of life … interwoven with relations of reciprocal recognition" (Habermas 1998, 40). Becoming members of conversations is vital to the cultivation of human experience. Conversational memberships interactively generate meaning and recursively so, always with more than mere ritual, more than the structures of relationships can predict. An individual's creative comprehension could not occur otherwise, nor could even those meanings experienced as shared and conventionalised. While power shapes opportunities for communicative challenges to power, power demands the creative capacity to comprehend. Day-to-day mutual recognition offers the intersubjective power to see beyond subordination. Moreover, it is the inevitable ambiguity of the shared vernacular that keeps conversations going that serve as an interactive frustrator of full conformity within the lifeworld. Ambiguity cannot be eradicated to the extent the vernacular is spoken at all. In that way (but of course not only in that way), the lifeworld is a zone of practices that *demands* recognition. The question is whether and how that demand comes to describe a society's expectations expressed in its institutions.

This is the stuff of an inheritance radically different from societies and "communicative practices" conceived as "strategic-instrumental actions." The latter provided metaphors for the exercise of power from theory to practice, as in, for example, the positivist linguistic turn valuing "clarity." There the call for clarity is a call for the unambiguous, where one needs no conversation-partner to follow a rule (Apel 1972). Those who speak vernaculars redo the rules even as they conform, but they also know "clarity" as code for "conformity" in any struggle to comprehend. The dismissal in theory or practice of interactive partnerships would have to mean the end of communication, a prospect one might contemplate unproblematically only by forgetting the fact that the paths even to conformity require conversation-partners. The idea of mutual recognition is not about confusing "communication" with ambiguity-free idealisations of meaning, but about the creation and re-creation of *mutuality through recognition*. Ambiguous recognition that invites further conversation breathes life into meaning. Mutual recognition transforms the word that would have meaning into an act of invitation, however ignored and repressed. Collectively interacting subjects, as *co-subjects*, harbor the potential to challenge power and authority, even when not enacted. The idea of mutual recognition captures an irreducible dimension of experience and action that provides a certain conceptual strength for Critical Theory. It does not describe an ideal world or a clear utopia, nor does it describe a world without oppression. It describes an always-operating human propensity that may be circumvented, commoditised and even brutalised by both academy and society, but which remains intact enough to keep a vernacular going, and with it, the creative and potentially challenging impulse.

Even as they are suppressed and only apparently silenced, bearers of the vernacular are Critical Theory's bearers of enlightenment today. Their experiences with mutuality, with recognition beyond the enclave – these are the conditions that concern the Critical Theory of society. An arc from Hegel and von Humboldt to, for example, Dewey (1958), Mead (1968) and Habermas is not sufficient even for the analysis of mutual recognition. There are other contributors receiving attention or in need of recovery for the history of ideas about mutual recognition. Articulating that arc faces institutionalised communication research as the propagation of social scientific targeting operations, disciplining the field through a multi-generational obsession with "effects," "messages," "technologies," and "audiences" (McLuskie 2007). Not only in the U.S., but in Europe as well, "marketing" and other synonyms for strategic-instrumental, sanitised inflections of propaganda work describe pressing occasions for alternative conceptions of communication and its potentials for peace. Shifts from communicative to technical interests confuse communication with control and threaten peace as a result. Critical Theory from the communicative to its recognition turn offers legacy concepts that today encourage caution about "communication" solutions without the understanding that societies already have lifeworlds struggling to practice mutual recognition.

The idea of mutual recognition is the beneficiary of several key conceptual moves that recommend themselves to understanding the problem of peace. One is an analytic distinction between communication and other forms of social action, i.e., between those oriented toward living together in a lifeworld to act in light of *and* critical of shared agreements. Another is to separate actions oriented toward success from the idea of authentic discussion and debate. Mutual recognition comes

more fully into view with the move to conceptualise communicative action always and everywhere with intersubjective subjects, even for the recessed experiences of the alienated, whose even most humdrum of utterances outline reservoirs for a rational society and democratic impulses toward one. Another move is to elaborate the Hegelian "struggle for recognition" as a dialectic of work and interaction. Still another is to regard the model of conversation as the exercise of emancipatory competencies, because (a) *mutual recognition becomes a necessary presupposition for the possibility of meaning at all*, and (b), it is always and everywhere a known, experienced *achievement*, even for matters as basic as everyday comprehension in the lifeworld. Another move is to situate recognition as a lifeworld practice, with the lifeworld itself embedded within the history of domination. These are some of the intersections receiving close attention in Critical Theory today, especially because, by many accounts, lifeworlds continue to be "colonised." Expressed from the standpoint of the theory of communicative action, systematically suppressed lifeworlds distort mutual recognition.

Another move recognises the inheritance of the old Left idea of solidarity in the concept, "mutual recognition," an idea "tied to…the necessity of having a standpoint of critique within society [and] so closely connected to identifying a revolutionary subject" (Honneth in Fraser and Honneth 2003, 239). This inheritance identifies meaning-making as a collective re-creation and re-imagination of society. As communication, this is an action that aspires to and presupposes the freedom to take conversational lives beyond already socialised experience. Since socialisation is not total, it leaves space to individuate. Because socialisation requires others, conversations and interactions create interpretive spaces for recognising Others.

When Honneth wrote his *Struggle for Recognition*, he argued that Hegel uncritically regarded the organisation of the ethical community hierarchically rather than interactively. Tendencies toward ontology in peace research and in communication ethics (cf. Christians and Traber 1997) bypass, however, the know-how of interaction, where mutuality and recognition proceed as cultivation practices open-ended enough to reinvent the moral compass – whether that occurs or not. Thus Hegel also (albeit with contradiction) stressed an intersubjectivist concept of human identity through an account of *media of recognition*, shedding hierarchical moral and ethical systems in favor of conceptions of intersubjective action (Hegel 1983). The intersubjective experiences decisive for socialisation still needed to be analyzed for their cultivation of egos capable of knowing themselves as political actors. So explicated, *solidarity is a fundamental mode of interpersonal experience*.

The idea of a society predicated on solidarity leads to the notion of a deliberative democracy (Habermas 1996). As an aspiration, it aims to institutionalise mutual recognition in constitutional law through procedural rather than hierarchical proposals. Societies appear as open horizons held by their citizens who expect solidarity and are receptive to societal revision as a result. This is the import of the *recognition turn* in the theory of communicative action.

That theoretical turn in Critical Theory places a premium on the expectation of reciprocity in society. As a *preunderstanding* within society, the social expectation of participation overthrows other background expectations once they threaten each individual's existence, a reality of dependency on the Other where "I" and "You" reciprocally produce and reproduce one another. The *reciprocal expectation of*

mutuality gives the theory of communicative action its stress on recognition as *both* struggle *and* embedded experience. This approach to communication and recognition opposes accounts of social order that read recognition as purposive-rational processes vested in strategically acting subjects alone, as we find in some versions of international relations, peace research, and security studies. In the "context-transcendent potential of the validity claims raised in everyday communicative processes," mutual recognition of the reciprocity of communication provides a standard for critique: the "potential already built into everyday communicative action," where "reason in everyday life" operates through concrete, intersubjective subjects who can and do actively interrogate assertions in the range from basic comprehension to issues of truth and justice. They are able to question from their practical positions in society with a vernacular that already supplies "idealizing suppositions of recognition and reciprocity" as experienced and frustrated expectations distinct from strategic and merely instrumental actions. Thus the idea of mutual recognition is also an "everyday human activity" that carries a human, social, and potentially societal norm. The counterfactuality of mutual recognition as a societal and global norm is both occasion for critique and cause for "alternative[s] to traditional conceptions of truth and justice" (Cooke 1998, 5).

When describing diversity in nations, von Humboldt (1999) once proposed the idea of reality as a creative, open project that persists through the individuating dimensions of socialisation. Linguistic communities coalesce into states and then creatively transform their development without giving up individuality. The communication theory of society invokes this reading to point beyond the empirically given and the historical moment as an impulse of the cultural cultivation of nations aspiring to the recognition of diversity. Uniqueness in commonality requires regular conversation, however. When nations come into existence, partisanships for different versions and visions of social experience and social organisation demand similar recognition practices on the model of the conversation (von Humboldt 1993). Their media of association – the varied languages of the species – permit thoughts, feelings, and ideas to be shared and make a difference toward collective ends. It would take the introduction of an imaginative concept to hold these tensions – variety and community, e.g. – in view. The concept of mutual recognition demands imagination.

This developmental perspective is subject to how we diagnose the course of societies and their arrangements in the world. The sheer counterfactuality of mutual recognition redefines the critical project still in light of Kant's famous aphorism, but for society's potential participants: to act according to the principle that *they* wish to become a universal law. This intersubjective subject is an emancipatory subject capable of enacting conditions for peace. Of course, the optimistically inflected power of mutual recognition is contested within Critical Theory. That debate is instructive and important, as "mutual recognition" is likely to be with us for some time.

Debating Mutual Recognition for Critical Theory

Fraser and Honneth (2003) debate the idea of mutual recognition in a series of essays under the title, *Redistribution or Recognition?* Though the title appears to offer a stark choice in Critical Theory – one on the side of a more economically

informed analysis of the situation of the age (Fraser's), the other, a more socially/psychologically informed analysis (Honneth's) – the difference is metatheoretical and, in a generous sense of the term, methodological. Honneth insists on a monistic conceptual approach that would derive the critical project in light of intersubjective recognition, while Fraser insists on a dualist conception that is more contextually sensitive. They label their critical-theoretical projects, respectively, "normative monism" and "perspectival dualism" (p. 3). The stakes, however, are much higher than such differences would suggest.

Fraser's position is that issues of the distribution of resources under the current phase of capitalism will fade from the Critical Theorist's view if we pursue the idea of mutual recognition as Honneth would have us do. Her claim is that the idea of mutual recognition harbors the hope that a moral, normative perspective stressing respect for others' differences will contribute to an emancipated society and planet. She sees another round of cul-de-sacs in Critical Theory. Instead, justice is a better conceptual home for Critical Theory, especially the idea of re-distributive justice – hence her contribution to the book's title. Honneth's position is that re-distributive justice – economic or otherwise –becomes just another abstraction unless and until existential recognition of the Other, while preserving difference, becomes recognition of ourselves as a normative basis for interaction. Neither argues that one should settle for the vast economic disparities that have become the hallmark of "the emerging new phase of capitalist society" that goes by the labels "post-Fordism, globalisation, and the information age" (p. 200). Thus despite the title of their book, the choice is not redistribution to the exclusion of recognition, nor recognition to the exclusion of redistribution. Honneth would integrate redistribution under recognition, while Fraser would pursue a more empirical-historical strategy to determine the relation between recognition and redistribution. Honneth thinks that relation already is clear in Fraser's agenda for Critical Theory.

From the first page of their debate, they agree that one should diagnose the age still with "Hegel's old figure of 'the struggle for recognition'," which "finds new purchase as a rapidly globalising capitalism accelerates transcultural contacts, fracturing interpretative schemata, pluralizing value horizons, and politicizing identities and differences." They agree, as Fraser puts it, that "we must adapt [Critical Theory] to a world in which struggles over status are proliferating amidst widening economic inequality. With its capacity to analyze such struggles, the concept of recognition represents a promising vehicle for reconstructing Critical Theory in an era of accelerating globalization" (p. 233).

What to expect of concepts in Critical Theory also defines some of the debate. Fraser sees the concept of mutual recognition as too narrow to cover democratic aspirations, as well as having insufficient scope to account for what in society and history suppresses their realisation. Moreover, the political challenges facing emancipatory change overtax the idea of mutual recognition, perhaps even distorting the concept "beyond recognition and depriving it of critical force" (p. 233). Honneth counters that, well before this debate, recognition-based frameworks in Critical Theory already had developed workable responses to societal and political history, by explaining how "the social order of the new capitalism should be conceptualized" (pp. 237-267). These economic explanations are unsettled in any event. If economic explanation is in the better position to address democratic potentials than

a communicative or interactively-oriented one, the concept of mutual recognition is in many respects at least as material as historical materialism. Honneth regards the concept to be in line with Marx and all of his successors, who tried to craft their versions of the critical project with the notion that a "moment of socially embodied reason" would have within it "a surplus of rational norms or organising principles that press for their own realization" (p. 238). That surplus is a reservoir for what Habermas (1971) once called the "emancipatory interest," a reservoir Honneth sees in the people's "recognition order."

To Honneth, this line from Marx to Habermas is agreed to by Critical Theorists to the point that Fraser, too, really is interested to show the ravages of modern history less in terms of "contingent conflict situations" and more in terms of the effort to "express the unmet demands of humanity at large" – by whatever concepts and practices get us there. The difference is in part over whether "the facticity of social relations always contains a dimension of transcending claims" (pp. 243-244). The point goes to Critical Theory as an evolutionary theory of society. Thus Honneth accuses Fraser of overemphasising paradigms of justice in the present, which may wrongly expect emancipatory progress by restricting foci only to a given society at a given time for its range of societal resources. Moreover, unless one wants to claim that intersubjectivity itself can be dispensed with from one stage of societal development to the next, the "critique of the structure of social reality" can go missing. "All social integration depends on reliable forms of mutual recognition," and transitions from one historical period to the next involve "deficits [that] are always tied to feelings of misrecognition." These misrecognitions serve up their own contributions to "the engine of social change" (p. 245) which, during periods of the successful suppression of the lifeworld, can easily be screened out of view. That is why Habermas "transferred the emancipatory, transcending potential from the practice of labor to the action model of linguistically mediated interaction" (p. 246).

Habermas's revision of the production paradigm produced, however, confusion on the question whether and to what extent social interaction or language carries the normative force of "recognition." Honneth sees the concept of mutual recognition as a move to more directly situate interactions within emancipatory, evolutionary shifts of societies. He reasons that expectations of recognition take not only linguistic form, but also physical gestures or other forms of expression that have deep-seated, anthropological roots in the evolution of human collectivities (p. 247). Mutual recognition is therefore an evolutionary carrier of species reproduction that should not be eclipsed by concepts that privilege the present – a persisting problem with contextualisms that nevertheless should also be held in view. This is, in a sense, a contemporary dialectical challenge for Critical Theory.

While socially constitutive expectations of recognition vary historically in the degree that members "can count on mutual approval" in different societies, something of an anthropological demand nevertheless is at work sufficiently for Honneth to claim an "anthropologised morality" as a constantly reproduced set of "recognition needs." This is a "bridge between normative theory and social theory" (p. 247) that Fraser misses in the debate, according to Honneth. Fraser instead takes the idea of mutual recognition to task for promoting the analysis of market processes in terms of "cultural" recognition alone. Honneth objects that the idea of mutual

recognition bears no relation to that "cultural turn" in critical studies that reduces economy to culture. To charge mutual recognition with "culturalism" is for Honneth misplaced because the concept actually works elsewhere in the theoretical array of Critical Theory, while other concepts focus on determinants of market processes, including those involved with global capitalism. The issue of culture over capital is a *desideratum* throughout Critical Theory, including since the earliest debates over communicative action. It should come as no surprise to see the debate again in the midst of the recognition turn in Critical Theory.

Honneth places *the recognising subject* in conditions of capitalism as an unavoidable and necessary addressee for Critical Theory. This subject is not "totally naïve" about "economic imperatives" (p. 249). Structural transformations of the economic sphere are not independent of normative expectations of those affected, "but depend at least on their tacit consent" (p. 250). The increasing "flexibilisation" and deregulation of work "shows unmistakably" that legal arrangements integrate not just the economic system, but socially consolidate work – into the private sphere, e.g., with working at home, or with provisions for "flex time." Thus the economic sphere both invades and takes on dimensions of the intimate sphere as states legally sanction such subjective rights as a distinct source of social recognition. These rights build on other *rights of economic recognition that are at the same time social recognition*, e.g., private property rights (p. 251). As capitalism expands globally, signs that economic processes are normatively mediated are unmistakable, particularly within the discourse on terrorism and military occupation. The order of things seems to have recognition shot through it.

A reconstruction of "*the recognition order of modern capitalist societies*" (p. 249; emphases added) is, via Honneth, a pressing matter for Critical Theory. More ambitious than Honneth's work to date, Fraser's critique helps to reconstruct the communication theory of society in its recognition turn, into issues concerning the future structuring of public spheres. The advantage of the concept of a "recognition order" is that it fine-tunes conceptions of political interests by stressing spheres that can persevere rather than "appear and disappear" in the course of a single generation or less. Its other advantage is that it systematically emphasises the intersubjective subject as *the interactive dimension of the public sphere*, a dimension frequently lost in illusions that equate a vital public sphere with strong, even independent, media. If to be recognised is to truly participate, the work entails cultivating a vibrantly participatory public sphere that is not reduced to technological capabilities. Honneth's recognition turn helps articulate the challenges facing fields interested in orienting their work for a more peaceful world that can (re)set the trajectory of societal evolution.

Contemporary Illusions of the Public Sphere as Interactive Info-Systems

If people "want feedback and response, not recognition" and then hope to add the concept "civil society" (Dean 2001, 166) as a supplement to feedback loops, the concept "public sphere" is sacrificed to a questionable linkage on the score of what passes for "interactivity" with(in) the internet. Such is the latest in a long line of reductionist accounts that morph conceptions of society into flows (see Hardt 1992) – Internet flows this time. This academic proclivity makes no distinctions between

bourgeois and Marxist analyses of society and of the political. For some, that is warrant enough to prefer the technological to the critical. For others, technology becomes a launch pad for inauthentic and uninformed movements in the name of "critical theory" and "critical research." Such theory-practice efforts work to orient collective aspirations for democracy in the direction of technological innovation, and their articulations confuse political struggle with the creation, availability, and ownership of internet sites. The orientation strikes out against the idea of interaction by reducing socially interactive concepts and practices to technological processes. Because Critical Theory aims to unmask such practices, academic attempts to co-opt Critical Theory and critical research motivate calls for a critical eye about claims to "the critical" on the score of technology. Peace research may learn from communication studies on this matter.

The empiricist (as opposed to empirical) wing of communication studies has for some time been joining culture in getting "hooked" on information technologies, replaying the century-long failed promise that technologies of communication will democratise society. One research report (December) offered information that probably any regular reader of popular computer magazines already knew – mapping as it did the territory of "client-server" interconnections to familiarise the academic-as-lay-person with the internet. It concluded that the prospect for a "more diverse on-line communication environment" is at hand, but without mentioning the difference between diversity of information technologies and diversity in human communication – to say nothing of the dynamics that might be involved. Companion articles aim to bring existing "paradigms" to new technologies, including paradigms of interpersonal communication, giving new conceptual life to, e.g., cognitive dissonance theory for "people in on-line settings" who may "take longer to reduce their uncertainty about one another" (Parks and Floyd 1996, 81). The "new technology" of "the Internet" is read as an opportunity to "show the connection between interpersonal and mass communication that have been an object of study since the two-step flow associated the two" (Morris and Ogan 1996, 42). As these old technological paradigms receive new life as celebrations of "The Net," they suppress from view and encourage in practice the suppression of conditions for solidarity, through an academic media-centrism fascinated with technology. Activity reduces to message flows as clicks and counter clicks, mouse gestures, and discovered interests that, because they come and go, carry little if any pragmatic consequence beyond enclaves of time and space. The public sphere becomes a concept for identifying participation with sending and receiving. Even "critical" or "cultural studies" can content itself with tracking scatter-paths of either differentiating and diffusing public spheres, search for new sites, or leave the idea of a public sphere behind altogether with reductions of interaction and participation to site-tripping: "There is a left cultural romanticism [in the link between] media and cultural studies" (Garnham 1985, 373). This is fertile ground for still-entrenched empiricist paradigms to ramp up Infobahn inflections of speeding technologies.

Politically, such conceptions technologically define both democracy and action as reasons to give up on the emancipatory potential of the public sphere concept. Why linger in a hold-out for communicative reason when its pragmatic consequences seem to have been delivered wherever and whenever one wishes to hyperlink? Against such a backdrop, expectations about the survival of the public sphere

yield to prematurity about its new possibilities *and* its obsolescence. The ideology is that the internet levels that playing field for a more actual democracy, a claim frequently forgetting the critique of the internet for its rampant corporatism, even from industry reporters in magazines that support the proliferation of computerisation (*PCWorld* and *PCMag*, e.g.). When, therefore, Dean recommends "that critical and democratic theorists jettison the idea of the public sphere" to "adopt a more complex model of civil society," she is celebrating the complexity of technologies while, as Habermas (1975a) argued, sacrificing democracy to complexity.

In the name of feedback and internet-response, Critical Theory is, once again, invoked for support of a technological reduction. At stake is much more than an intellectual tradition when altered practices in the interest of peaceful futures are read through technological definitions of participation and interaction. The systematically blind eye to interactional resources in the intimate spheres of socialisation and enculturation, and then to public spheres where debate could have pragmatic consequences, creates premature if not cynical optimisms about the age. Support for democratisation and emancipation continue in a line of false starts in the evolution of society. Messages into the air, however, do find audience-targets with pent-up recognition potential, but with questionable infrastructures for the formation of solidarity and consequential action.

Conclusion

Whenever peace research is portrayed as an emancipatory practice, its vision of social actors becomes crucial. Peace research as critical research is, like all fields, subject to the intersections of academy with society, and faces theories concerning the social construction of the Other *other* than "enemies" (Patomäki 2001, 733). In this effort, the concepts "communicative action," "public sphere," "mutual recognition" and "recognition order" present themselves as contemporary iterations of critical research. Regardless of the outcomes of debates within Critical Theory, informed, critical appropriation led to them. Critical Theorists continue to recognise the necessity to reconstruct Critical Theory, but with the sensibilities and concepts that aim, still, for future-oriented memory. Concepts concerning what it takes to become a participant now include interaction with others as part of the re-definition even of the obvious in search of emancipatory potentials. While felt in many fields, these concepts face co-opting cousins of capitalism – among them, technological definitions both of reality and of democratising possibilities. The practical situation of peace studies is shaped by such moves. Thus peace research faces the prospect of incorporating the idea of mutual recognition as part of its critical project with attention to the status of recognition-struggles and the recognition orders that occasion them. The conceptual mine-field here is confusion between communicative and strategic conceptions of interaction.

To recognise mutual recognition as something other than a strategic-instrumental affair would shift and problematise the focus of peace research. The nature of mutuality would be examined as the active pursuit of community as the *telos* but also the experience of communication. Critical peace researchers would articulate prospects for revision of what and whom we know. Critical work would see mutual recognition as an ever-present act that re-cognises as Others who "re-know" and "re-comprehend" their relations. The mutuality of re-cognition is seen as an existen-

tially recurring experience that, in spite of its systematic frustration, keeps coming back to develop a common, collective practice. Already actual in conflict-ridden societal histories, Dallmayr (2006, 1) recalls South Africa as a model for nations and a world at war and in terror: "In light of the horrendous forms of oppression and injustice prevailing in the world today, one can only hope that humankind some day will have the wisdom and courage to establish a global Truth and Reconciliation Commission charged both with exposing and rectifying existing abuses and with laying the groundwork for a more just and livable global future."

Mutual recognition may take a village, but any pragmatic consequences in the interest of peace also require a nation. Dallmayr appropriately raises the ante: It may require something like a world court or some other international infrastructure equipped to do more than war. The hard part is what it takes to create a global collective practice in the interest of peace.

Mutual recognition alone of course is not enough. Infrastructures that cultivate full participation in both law and a public sphere are, in a way, the point of mutual recognition in Critical Theory. Diagnosing the situation of the age with such infrastructures in mind appeals to mutuality and re-cognising our relations with Others. If "peace depends on infrastructures that civilise," and if critical peace research includes the "theory of the civilising process," Critical Theory is an important contributor to conceptions of peace as a humanistic project (Habermas 2001b, 17). The "re-cognition turn" in Critical Theory makes its contribution against a "rift of speechlessness" that too often within and between many societies "strikes home" (Habermas 2003, 103). That rift is another way to describe the "recognition order" of the age. Into that order, peace research no doubt will continue to find its own struggles, from academy to society, as a collectively self-reflective practice of mutual recognition.

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