Senior Independent Project
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Hegel, Rawls and the Communitarian Project

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Introduction.

My senior independent project is an engagement with the liberal-communitarian question, which is arguably the central debate in 20th-century social philosophy. My interest in this project stems largely from my analysis of the political problems currently facing this country, particularly in the Middle East. This issue is important with regard to other global problems as well, such as issues of political justice and representation facing European governments with regard to the growing size and awareness of the Muslim community, and issues of social justice for China’s impoverished labour and ethnic minorities (particularly relevant in recent months with the current troubles in Tibet). How does a representative, liberal-democratic society with such a standing in the world as ours approach these problems, which undoubtedly touch upon the issues of justice and freedom across cultural, social and linguistic boundaries?

The focal point of the liberal-communitarian argument is widely considered to be John Rawls’ Theory of Justice, which provides a cognitive, individual-centred account of justice and human freedom, and the resulting criticism of the Theory by Michael Sandel, who argued that the Theory of Justice did not take adequate account of human beings as ‘thick’ social agents. In this project, I: 1.) provide a narrative and analysis of the origins of the liberal-communitarian question in the German idealist thought of Kant and Hegel, 2.) address the primary (neo-Kantian) aims of Rawls’ Theory of Justice, and assess its successes and shortcomings, and 3.) argue that a more complete account of human freedom and justice will need to accommodate several important concerns central to the Hegelian-communitarian project, namely the normative importance of key communicative social and political structures and conditions within the ‘ethical life’ to the actualisation of an agent’s dignity and freedom.
As I demonstrate, the liberal-communitarian question is deeply rooted in the pivotal moral philosophy of Kant, and the German idealist school of thought which he inspired. Kant radically re-thinks what it means for an agent to be free and what it means for an agent to have moral responsibilities: in contrast to previous moral philosophies, Kant is able to determine the source of human responsibilities as human spontaneity itself, rather than a set of divine dictates. What it means to be a moral agent, in Kant’s view, is that in his spontaneity and radical freedom he possesses the abilities to create maxims for his actions and to bind himself to those maxims. The penultimate expression of morality Kant sees as respect for this spontaneity in an agent as an end-in-itself, applied universally for all agents and rationally accessible to each individual agent (Kant’s famous ‘categorical imperative’). A problem arises, however, when one tries to locate reason within this autonomous legislative process: if reason is located in an agent’s creation of maxims, there is nothing to guarantee that they ought to be universally-binding; if a maxim is universally-binding and an antecedent reason exists for its creation, it robs the agent of the radical freedom Kant argues has worth (the ‘Kantian paradox’). Kant’s answer to the paradox is merely that we must rely upon the ‘fact of reason’ as a matter of necessity, as we would be unable to function as agents without it.

The task falls to Kant’s successors to find an answer to this paradox. Hegel presents a solution which transforms ‘the fact of reason’ from a matter of necessity into a social and historical phenomenon: the law-giving and law-binding processes manifest themselves in social conflict (as he illustrated with the master-slave dialectic), and the universality and true freedom that Kant argues for only emerge as a result of the dissolution of the master-slave distinction, and the adoption of social practices which encourage free social expression and evaluation of agents’ legislative acts. We can see here the first traces of a distinction between these conceptualisations of freedom: as an
individual, self-motivated and intra-psychic phenomenon and as a social, inter-subjective one. Hegel's attempt to create a coherent, inter-subjective model of freedom, however, was never completed: Axel Honneth, Hegel scholar, social theorist of the Frankfurt School and author of *The Struggle for Recognition*, details Hegel's early attempts to synthesise a phenomenology with recognition as the primary concept. Hegel is able to describe familial, communal and legal relations in inter-subjective terms, but in his discussion on the state returns to an intra-psychic theory of consciousness.

Both sides of the liberal-communitarian divide draw heavily on the work of these two German idealists: Rawls, in his formulation of the *Theory of Justice*, works toward a model of justice and morality that is unabashedly Kantian, though his constructivist framework attempts to re-work Kant's 'fact of reason' into a pragmatic and less metaphysically-contingent formula using the thought-experiment of the 'veil of ignorance'. The criticisms of Taylor, MacIntyre and Sandel (though I cover only Sandel's criticism in this paper), on the other hand, are heavily influenced by the Hegelian emphasis on the deep sociality of human beings: Sandel criticises the 'veil of ignorance' thought-experiment for reducing the human self to a simple 'weigher of preferences', a 'thin' self.

I believe that even though Sandel's criticism is misdirected, in that Rawls is not attempting to reconstruct the 'self', Sandel has the right idea. In his theory of justice, Rawls (in choosing to focus his theory on the cognitive capacity for the formation of principles in the 'veil of ignorance'), while avoiding some of the transcendental problems that Kant faces, nevertheless brings us to a position which does not allow us to adequately engage questions of justice at the level of communication and practice. Since an account of justice by necessity has to address how people cope socially and inter-subjectively, this is a deficiency which needs rectification.
How will this rectification take place? Although Hegel’s original inter-subjective project is unfinished, Axel Honneth brings out elements of Hegel’s theory of recognition, corrects and reinforces the phenomenology by making reference to the social psychology of George Herbert Mead and Donald Winnicott, and gives us a reconstructed critical social theory based on recognition. Here, there may be potential to provide normative grounds for analysing and evaluating the political and social structures on which the realisation of inter-subjective freedom in the social life depends.
I. Laying the Foundations: Radical Freedom, the Kantian Paradox and the Return to Sociality

Of Kant's contributions to Western philosophy and Western ethical philosophy in particular, among the most important was his insistence on, and defence of, the radical individual freedom ('autonomy', or Wille) of human beings to make moral decisions beyond the scope of their desires. The grounds for such autonomy, Kant argues, lie in our ability to think of ourselves as agents fully endowed with rationality. It is possible and necessary, Kant argues, for any person to experience herself phenomenally, as a causally-determined physiological system. This is what any human being would do when she experiences anything (impose her own forms upon objects of her experience) but this is not what she does when she is making moral choices, putting them into action, or taking responsibility for her actions. When she does take responsibility in this way, she doesn't consider herself as a causally-determined physiological system (as any phenomenal view would demand), but rather as a noumenal moment of free will, and with that assumption she is able to hold herself responsible for her own spontaneity. It is not possible for us to know, Kant argues, whether or not this noumenal moment is real (since we can have no experience of things-in-themselves), but the everyday assumptions of autonomy and free will are so basic and so necessary that we would be completely unable to function without them.

In terms of the limitations of what can actually be known about the human condition, Kant clearly takes Humean sceptical criticisms to heart. Kant writes that he has 'found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith', by which he means the faith that human beings are not simply machines determined by laws of nature and causality, but have a noumenal moment of responsibility and free will. The way in

which human agents can be considered free lies in the distinction Kant draws between the phenomenal and the noumenal: moral responsibility is not a matter of choosing between a number of conflicting pre-determined desires (which can be explained as natural phenomena, this type of freedom Kant describes as Willkür), but a matter of using the powers of reason to legislate maxims whereby a person can define the nature and the rational grounds of his actions, and then act on those maxims, even if it would mean suspending all of his pre-determined desires and biological inclinations. This made for a radical departure from earlier empiricists such as Hume, for whom reason is and ought to be a 'slave to the passions'.

Kant makes clear that we must assume this autonomy to take ourselves as agents, and that we must assume a radical freedom which allows us to suspend all of our pre-determined desires and biological inclinations in moral decision-making. But this assumption raises several questions: what is the nature of this radical freedom, and what can be done with it? Kant illuminates two possible models: the first is a being whose decision-making processes are completely random, whose actions are governed not by the laws of nature nor by any other conceivable law, but by mere chance (a being for whom neither freedom nor autonomy has any real meaning at all). The second is that of a being which, through the use of reason, is able to define himself and guide his actions by the maxims that he sees fit to author and then apply to himself. Kant thought of the second model as according better with human spontaneity, wherein agents do not rely on either chance or external causality, but rather create causes for action within themselves which (potentially) have nothing to do with pre-determined desires and biological inclinations. The individual agent has the ability to spontaneously create causes for action at the

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5 Pinkard, *Idealism*, 47.
potential cost of all his pre-determined desires, and it is this ability of the agent to spontaneously create his own causes for action that must be seen as having intrinsic moral value. When an agent does create such causes for himself, he is always acting in the interest of being his own causal force and being his own end, rather than as the means to some other end. Kant takes this a step further: for an agent to be his own cause, and to rationally form laws to guide his actions, which work on a universal basis in a world containing other agents like himself, he must rationally arrive at laws which respect and hold as intrinsically valuable (as 'ends-in-themselves') the universal autonomy of all agents. Here we can see how Kant arrives at his famous 'categorical imperative', which he considered a universally-binding law in which one is never to treat another agent as a means to one's own ends, but always as an end-in-herself.

The 'categorical imperative' is a radical notion, because it is derived completely internally, from the individual agent's faculties of reason. Prior to Kant, the moral laws which were considered universal had been thought to originate externally to their subjects, usually in the form of a set of divine dictates. Here, however, Kant has tried to demonstrate that the process of forming the conclusions of the 'categorical imperative', to legislate respect for other agents as ends-in-themselves, could be completed as a rational extension of one's own individual agency. The ethical process, in Kant's view, becomes entirely intra-psychic: in spite of the fact that they are directed also to others, the demands of the categorical imperative to respect the moral dignity of other agents, can be made by oneself and for oneself.

The radical nature of Kant's categorical imperative cannot be overemphasised. On the conceptual level, it does allow for a meaningful philosophy of morals. In addition to this, it makes ethics a matter, not of divine dictates, but of a logical outgrowth of the

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human rational process: this preserves the view that human beings are spontaneous and radically free (even though to do so, Kant still has to make room for faith). According to this view, individual human beings are fully capable of discovering and applying universal moral rules for themselves and for others.

The claims that Kant makes on the agent, however, conflict at the very level of individual autonomy, in what later German idealists term the 'Kantian paradox'. A number of philosophers in the Kantian tradition think that this account of human ethical reasoning was insufficient, given the radical freedom that Kant is trying to establish. Kant formulates a universal law for morality, the categorical imperative, which would be equally accessible by all rational agents, by virtue of their being rational agents. Any kind of universal moral law, equally accessible to and binding upon all agents, should give an antecedent reason for moral action on behalf of an agent.

How is this view paradoxical? If such an antecedent reason were to exist, it would make that reason a causal force on a human being's agency, thus undermining the spontaneity and radical freedom which Kant had thought definitive of agency in the first place. This being the case, a completely free and spontaneous being, without antecedent reasons for moral action, would be expected to rationally self-legislate the universal moral law and bind herself to it. In this case, any designation it would have as a moral law, binding upon all agents, would become suspect: why should this agent, who is completely free and completely spontaneous, consider herself obligated to legislate for herself, and then bind herself to a 'universal' moral law, if all moral laws are to be self-legislated by the individual agent? Privileging the process of binding oneself to the moral law condemns agency to causal determinism; privileging the process of spontaneously self-authoring the moral law negates the universality of that law.

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8 Pinkard, Idealism, 59.
Kant merely replies that we have to satisfy ourselves that the 'fact of reason' is sufficient to answer these concerns. But to later German idealists (Hegel in particular), this is an insufficient answer to the paradox. Kant's model demands of a subject that he effectively split herself into two: when she is forming a law and when she tries to apply the same law to herself, she is forced to consider herself in two completely different ways (what Hegel called becoming the 'other of [her]self'). Hegel thought that this was not a useful move, because it cannot be demonstrated when the self is split in this way exactly how one of these processes of the self is supposed to conceptualise and explain the other. Kant's 'fact of reason' eludes both sides, in that it cannot be successfully attached to either spontaneously conceiving of a law or binding oneself to its universal application. Since neither the law-forming nor the binding half of the self can thus take priority over the other, a metaphysical, intra-psychic explanation of the Kantian paradox cannot work. The paradox remains unsolved; the individual is left stranded as a split self.

The problem, in Hegel's thinking, lies in Kant's transcendental notion of the self that had turned individual humanity into an abstraction, a premise which would demand a fully intra-psychic, transcendental account of human reason and agency. The solution to the Kantian paradox would not be transcendental and abstracted, but concrete, historical and developmental. In Hegel's thinking, the Kantian paradox had played out already (and continues to play out) over the course of human history and in the courses of the relationships between individual agents, and the solution to the Kantian paradox (the 'fact of reason') would be found not in a subject, but among subjects with the ability to make legislative claims on each other and evaluate those self-same claims. Each subject has the ability to legislate for himself, but autonomy and ethical consciousness (in

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the Kantian sense) have no reality until and unless these legislative acts, and the ability to
produce these legislative acts, are acknowledged and validated by another subject, within
the context of an ethical community. One subject may legislate for both, and the other
can acknowledge the legislative act and give it reason, thus the law becomes binding upon
both subjects.

History, however, does not play out this cleanly in reality. A subject might refuse
to see another's legislative act as binding, considering it arbitrary, lawless or unjust and
thereby refusing it reason. The result of such a dynamic is simply that the two subjects
(or groups of subjects) end up in a life-and-death struggle over recognition of their
autonomy. Hegel sets up a thought-experiment, which takes the form of an abstracted
struggle which he thought could be representative of such human conflicts: that one
party will win out over the other, and this happens when the claims of the winning party
become more important than their actual lives, and when the other side capitulates and
surrenders their autonomy. The inter-subjective relationships that express themselves in
this dynamic are those between master (the law-giver) and slave (the reason-giver).¹²

But even in this inter-subjective construction, Hegel recognises that the Kantian
paradox still remains unsolved. The social scheme would develop in this fashion: the
master, authoring laws for both himself and the slave, still does so from a position of
complete lawlessness, completely free and spontaneous (privileging the self-authoring
half of the process of legislation). Though he seeks recognition from the slave for his acts
of self-legislation, the means by which he seeks to obtain it is force, the same by which he
‘won’ the original struggle. Those the master subjects to this use of force will express a
kind of ‘recognition’ of those acts to avoid losing their lives, but this ‘recognition’ could
not be obtained without the use of force – the slave is not in a position to give the master's

¹² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, ‘Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and
self-legislated acts true recognition, which is, by necessity, free and spontaneous. What he obtains from the use of force is not true recognition – it is merely the exercise of his own will, reflected back at him. The master becomes dependent on the ‘recognition’ of the slave for his self-legislation, and upon the use of force to obtain that ‘recognition’.

The slave, on the other hand, in continuing to be forced to bind himself to the laws of the master, begins to understand the extent of his autonomy and form a concept of universality. When he sees that the master does not act out of working concepts of autonomy and universality, but is dependent upon the slave’s own validation of his laws, the slave comes to the realisation that the master is authoring laws from a position of lawlessness rather than reason. Even when the force the master exerts over the slave is used to curtail his physical freedoms, the slave is nonetheless able to posit himself as an autonomous self at the point where he has nothing left to lose, and he realises that his autonomy simply cannot be removed from him by force¹. The roles of slave and master are here reversed: while the master is now dependent on the slave for ‘recognition’, the slave has become independent of the master.

So, where is the solution to the Kantian paradox to be found? How do human beings free themselves from the master-slave relationship? Hegel cites it as a social learning experience: the master has to work his way toward the awareness that this inter-subjective relationship, in which his authority as a law-maker is completely dependent on his own projection of force onto other subjects, ultimately does not work. The validation he seeks as an agent can only be attained when he in turn respects the autonomy of those who are supposed to validate him. The end result of a working inter-subjective dynamic in which reason can be found would look a lot like Kant’s categorical imperative, in which agents come to a full, freely-given recognition of each other as ends-in-themselves.

¹ Hegel, ‘Independence’, 97-98.
This would play out with agents coming to an understanding of how they can be by turns both 'master' and 'slave' for each other in such a way that recognition-giving would be a mutual and mutually freeing exercise\(^4\). Relationships between people, predicated on such forms of mutual and mutually-freeing recognition as love, compassion and solidarity (and the agony-ridden and mutually-destructive forms of recognition inherent in the relationship between, say, master and slave or criminal and victim), become absolutely necessary for any true understanding of the underpinnings and development of freedom.

If the Kantian categorical imperative was a radical rediscovery of morality, Hegel has here, indeed, a radical rediscovery of the social dimension of freedom. The laws that we enact as agents in the Kantian mould (which are supposed to affirm us as spontaneous and free beings) are enabled by, and have consequences within, a horizon of interactions with other agents. Spontaneity and freedom are no longer simply matters of cognition, subject to a reliance on an intra-psychic 'fact of reason'; rather, reason develops out of human interaction and communication, and is found within the practices which have developed out of communities of care and out of historical social struggles. Thus, I attempt to demonstrate (using a Hegelian re-conceptualisation of freedom and autonomy), in addition to the cognitive states of individuals, that the social conditions and the political structures surrounding those individuals that allow them to exercise their autonomy freely (both law-giving and law-validating) by communicating with other individuals inside an ethical community, warrant substantial consideration. It is only through these structures of public communication that the agent is able to fully realise himself and exercise his own freedoms.

II. There and Back Again: Honneth’s Reconstruction and Diagnosis of Hegel’s Early Project

I have so far examined the beginnings of Hegel’s project in constructing a narrative for the Kantian concept of reason from human social realities, and how he reconceives spontaneity and freedom in the social dimension. Instead of being forced into the position of needing to establish the kind of reason necessary for Kantian Moralität as a mere ‘ought’, Hegel’s model instead establishes the birth of reason (and thus, morality) in the realm of social realities. Observing the ways in which people relate to each other as political animals (ζώον πολιτικόν), Hegel provides us with a sketch for possible constructions of ethical systems with inter-subjectivity being the core concept. The trouble is that in the midst of this experiment making recognition the basis for Kantian reason, Hegel abandons the project in favour of an alternative model not with inter-subjectivity and social recognition, but consciousness as the core concept.

Axel Honneth, author of The Struggle for Recognition, notes that Hegel does not, in fact, abandon cognition among the driving forces behind morality. Indeed, the reflexive capacities of mind (Geist) are crucial to an understanding of Hegel’s early development of an inter-subjective system locating reason in a social narrative. Kant’s understanding of mind is the ‘I’ which attaches itself to individual experiences and gives them a sense of continuity (an individual’s life), but Hegel radicalises this understanding of mind. Every individual mind attaches itself not merely to its experiences, but to the ways in which it makes sense of them, or grasps (greift) them. An individual can attach herself to the concept (Begriff), and thus make use not only of her own experiences, but can continue the evolution of a concept or set of concepts which has been inherited from her parents.

5 Honneth, Anerkennung, 67.
her teachers and her society. Even in Hegel's adaptation and radicalisation of Kant's models of cognition, a form of inter-subjectivism is at play.

The question is, how does this inter-subjectivism play out between individuals? In order to be a functioning social being, not to mention an agent endowed with 'rights', a person has to come to a particular understanding of herself, and such an understanding is produced by interacting with the social world. Ethically-binding relationships between people, the relationships by which people come to this understanding of themselves, originate (according to Hegel) in the human drives to create, to labour and to procreate. These basic drives are constructive, constitutive of the need of the individual subject to reify herself in the world in some real way, or (as Honneth describes it) 'an experience of something “making itself into a thing”'. It is one key way in which a person is able to see her own value: a point which Hegel's student, Karl Marx, later (and more famously) inherits. The creation of value in reification, the process of 'making oneself into a thing', becomes a basis for social interaction: the exchange of goods in consideration of the value imposed on them by their creators, or commerce. Of course, human labour and commerce in themselves are insufficient for establishing a person's real freedom and worth in the Kantian sense: an automaton can create something such that it can be seen as having value, and an individual person's labour doesn't have any power in itself to reveal the social truths out of which Kantian reason can arise. But for both creative and destructive relationships determining the social world out of which reason arises, the creative process of labour is a fundamental and basic consideration.

The human drive to procreate, then, Hegel sees as the basis for the following step in his social model, and one closely related to instrumental labour. Indeed, the desire for another human being and the drive to make oneself the instrument for that desire can be

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16 Honneth, Anerkennung, 35.
17 Pinkard, Idealism, 311-312.
seen as a very basic form of creative inter-subjectivity. In such a relationship based on desire, a human being both experiences himself as an object with instrumental and creative use (the 'labour' of love, as it were) and recognises some vital aspect of himself in his partner. He sees his own desire for another human being reflected back at him, with himself as the object, and the desire becomes something shared, something mutual. This is a step in the right direction, but, as Hegel notes in his Jena lectures, what is mutually reflected is not a fully-fledged autonomous being complete with reason, but the 'uncultivated natural self'.

In relationships of care, whether sexual or familial, there is limited potential for a form of Kantian ethicality, as a relationship of mutual need (however transcendental its roots might appear to be) necessitates reciprocity and trust. But it provides very little basis for universality as Kant conceives of it. Caring, mutually-creative forms of recognition based on friendship, familial affection (φιλία) or sexual attraction (έρως) cannot provide the full basis for personhood and legal relations (the need for protection of rights, for example). These kinds of relationships of care do not equip the individual agent with the proper tools for dealing with the destructive and dominating capacities that lead up to, and lie at the heart of, the master-slave dialectic.

The human capacity for destruction is also at the heart of a kind of relationship, between criminal and victim, for example. In this relationship, fundamental aspects of personhood come under threat, such that the participants are forced to realise that aspects of their own humanity, worth and freedom can be annihilated by each other. The way that Hegel approaches this is again through human instrumentality, and he uses the example of labour. The fruits of a person's labour, the things of her creation by which she defines

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18 Honneth, Anerkennung, 37.
19 Honneth, Anerkennung, 40.
herself, are recognised as having value by other people. This provides the basis for not only commerce, but theft as well.

What is at stake in an act of theft, according to Hegel (as opposed to previous social theorists like Thomas Hobbes) is an aspect of ethical life, not simply a desire for material gain. Hegel sees the roots of theft in a kind of social alienation: by the act of theft, the thief isolates himself from his society by acting only 'for himself', while refusing to recognise the worth (as expressed through labour and goods) of his fellow social participants. But why would he willingly isolate himself from the society? Hegel saw theft primarily as a defence mechanism on the individual's own behalf, as a reaction to his own perceived devaluation. In theft (which amounts to the destruction of value in the goods of another agent), the thief finds a way of gaining attention and asserting his own self-hood by disrupting the common order. What the thief actually desires, more than just the goods themselves, is a validation of his claim (in other words, a form of social recognition). He would not otherwise wilfully devalue the people from whom he stole, in favour of an isolated existence 'for himself' in this desperate kind of self-protection.

And what of the person who has been devalued, the victim of this theft? The forceful severance of himself from his goods by the thief, in a purely self-interested action on the thief's part, was the obvious result. But the destruction of the value the victim had placed by his labour in the object stolen has a far deeper meaning. By attacking that value by theft, the thief has attacked the victim himself on the level of his personhood, initiating (in Hegel's terms) a life-and-death struggle between criminal and victim parallel to that described as lying at the heart of the master-slave dialectic. Through the experience and resolution of such life-and-death struggles, Hegel concludes, the subjects involved in this relationship gain an understanding of their social context.

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10 Honneth, Anerkennung, 43-44.
such that they view themselves as having rights that are closely attached to their personhood. Here Hegel's work seems to have found some substantial potential to fulfil its goal. The negative form of recognition implicit in these life-and-death struggles seems to lead to an awareness of simple negative rights, in parallel with Hegel's later development of the master-slave dialectic into something resembling moral universality. If these rights can be established by working from shared social experience the way Hegel seems to approach it, autonomy should not be too far off.

At each of these stages in human development of personhood, social habits form around the various forms of recognition: these manifest as customs, traditions and laws governing the relationships between people. Each stage of human existence in the ethical world is bound up in the shared mores (Sitten) of an ethical community, aspects of a concept of developing ethicality that have been internalised to the point that they colour every way in which subjects who inherit them deal with each other. As social relations become more complex, subsequently complex forms of recognition are required, in which both emotive, constructive relation-based care and cognitive, destructive relation-based respect for rights become dialectically involved. Unfortunately, as Honneth notes, Hegel's early experiment in locating reason within social, recognition-based frameworks left off here, when Hegel moved away from sociality and into a consciousness-centred theory.

Honneth cites Hegel's explanation of the existence of states as particularly problematic and disappointing. While one might expect his argumentation for the existence of the customs, habits and legal institutions that make up a state to be grounded in inter-subjectivity (a struggle for recognition between people or groups of people), Hegel makes the surprising argument that state-formation has at its core the actions and

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\[^{11}\text{Honneth, Anerkennung, 47.}\]
\[^{12}\text{Pinkard, Idealism, 277.}\]
drive of a single individual, a sort of Romantic hero who imposes his will upon the society. Hegel here is perhaps influenced by once having seen Napoleon—whom he described as ‘this world-soul’—riding through Jena. No longer is the existence of the state considered to be a matter of the development of inter-subjective activity and communication; rather, it is supposed to be a matter of an individual relating directly to an abstract body of custom, mediated by admiration of this national tyrant-hero and what he represents.

Facets of Hegel’s early writings showed potential for a radical revision of Kant’s conception of morality: to present it as an inter-subjective phenomenon with actual grounding in a social struggle for recognition rather than as a phenomenon dependent on Kant’s metaphysically-burdensome ‘fact of reason’, or upon a social contract between pre-moral individual agents. This revision, however, was incomplete, as Hegel never fully demonstrated in his early writings how these various forms of social recognition, expressed in the customs and traditions of the ethical life (Sittlichkeit), can form a sound basis for the universal and categorical demands of Moralität. The raw potential contained in Hegel’s Jena writings for a system of ethics based on the human struggle for recognition has not, however, been completely disregarded.

Certain metaphysical assumptions on Hegel’s part, however, would require revision for an ethical theory based on his early ideas of mutual recognition and communication to be completed. Hegel’s work, while it does bring Kantian morality closer to the empirical and away from the transcendental assumption of a ‘fact of reason’, still works from some speculative (rather than empirical) suppositions about human nature and psychology: for example, in the roots of love and crime. In this, at least one of Honneth’s diagnoses of Hegel’s system is correct. If, as it seems, that in this project it

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34 Honneth, Anerkennung, 58-60.
is Hegel's aim to overcome the ramifications of the Kantian paradox by naturalising reason (and thus, morality), the project must be taken further in a naturalistic direction. In a discussion of how this may be done, however, it will prove useful to examine the strengths and shortcomings of alternative ethical and meta-ethical theories, which also attempt to naturalise Kantian rationality.
III. A Theory of Justice: New Model, Old Missteps

For a look at another approach to the adaptation of Kantian principles to an era not quite as friendly to metaphysics, a good example would be John Rawls' Theory of Justice, a work which sets out to create a liberal and democratic model-conception of the just society on the basis of Kantian principles. This work has also been the fulcrum of considerable debate and controversy among social philosophers. It has, for example, served as the one of the central foci of the liberal-communitarian question: the liberal focus on protecting individual property and negative rights, has been contested by the communitarians, who (to a significant degree in the tradition of Hegel) argue for a focus on human beings as social agents in the contexts of their relationships and culture. Most often-cited are the criticisms of Rawls by Michael Sandel, who attacked Rawls' notion of the 'self' (as implied in his use of the 'veil of ignorance') as a 'simple weigher of preferences'.

Though Sandel perhaps misconstrues Rawls to some extent, his criticisms do merit serious consideration. What is at issue is not necessarily a model of the agent-self, but rather how any workable, universal model of justice is going to successfully engage the agent-self. Instead of focussing on the agent-self as the point of error in Rawls' Theory of Justice, it is the model of justice itself which is to a degree mistaken, in that Rawls seems to be grounding it firmly in acts of higher-order intra-psychic cognition rather than in inter-subjective recognition.

The Theory of Justice, which articulates the idea of 'justice-as-fairness', takes on the reconstruction a liberal Kantian deontology from a pragmatic, contractarian model of

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society and human interaction. He accomplishes this through the ‘original position’, a thought-experiment in which agents are to arrive at principles of justice to apply to a society in which they will have a role. From the original position, in which questions of the circumstances of the people for whom the principles of justice are being formed are left out. The person deciding the principles of justice must do so in ignorance of the abilities, familial situations, descent and background of all other persons in the society, on the basis that these qualities are morally irrelevant and thus should have no part in moral decision-making. Instead, all decisions on principles of justice must take into account the fact that all persons in the well-ordered society are free (in the Kantian sense of freedom as moral autonomy), that they are equal in terms of moral worth, and that they are fully able to form, re-form and execute conceptualisations of justice and of the good (good in the sense of individual fulfilment). The way in which freedom and equality are represented by the deciders of principles of justice beneath the veil of ignorance is in the idea that once these principles of justice are formed for a society, the people who decided them will be ignorant of their role in this society.

The way Rawls approaches the veil of ignorance from here takes on some features of the social contract. The way such a person would decide on principles of justice would be by the maximin rule, deciding how he can most effectively minimise his own maximum possible loss (in terms of liberties, dignities and other ‘primary goods’), supposing his role in the society to entail the greatest possible disadvantage. The principles of justice that would be applied in the well-ordered society, according to Rawls, would be ones of equality: each member of the well-ordered society would have equality of opportunity to decide their place in the well-ordered society, and any resulting inequalities in the society with regard to the distribution of primary goods would serve to benefit those the least well-off.
A possible construction of justice-as-fairness here would be that it appeals to a single agent’s rational self-interest. Rawls, however, portrays the veil of ignorance as a representative device for Kant’s categorical imperative - one must treat other human beings as free and equal agents with the same ability to decide on principles of justice and the good, even while supposedly (from the veil of ignorance) playing in a lottery to secure one’s own primary social goods. Kenneth Baynes, author of *The Normative Grounds of Social Criticism*, examines both the *Theory of Justice* and Sandel’s criticisms of Rawls’ work. He argues that when an agent takes the rationality, duties and interests of others into consideration, an agent is already outside the realm of pure prudential reasoning, since some form of reciprocity is already being demanded that cannot be satisfied with the model of the single-agent-and-his-self-interest\(^6\).

Though the process through which Rawls arrives at his concept and principles of justice is itself not itself necessarily Kantian but more reminiscent of the contractarian models of liberal British empiricists like Locke and Hume, Rawls does accomplish his task. Rawls’ conclusions about the nature of ‘justice’ are decidedly Kantian - even if the device of the original position incorporates a form of prudential reasoning in arriving at principles of justice, it is an effective instrument for testing whether or not they are universal. The original position has a very specific use as a cognitive tool in Rawls’ system of ‘Kantian constructivism’, such that the outcomes of the judicial reasoning done behind the veil of ignorance (principles of justice arrived at by agents as defined by the model-conception of the human being) correctly and appropriately mirror the categorical imperative. In the ‘original position’, for example, because a person cannot take into account the specifics of another subject’s situation, she is effectively forced to universalise any claims she makes with regard to any moral principles at which she might arrive.

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Because she would be unaware of her own situation while forming the principles of justice by which she agrees to be bound, she would attempt to create principles of justice which would be beneficial even to those in the position of greatest disadvantage. Being unaware of her own situation thus causes her to be unencumbered by any kind of prejudice that would hamper her ability to make her legislative acts universal.

Michael Sandel’s criticism of Rawls’ construction of the ‘original position’ was that it assumed the ability of individual subjects to fully abstract themselves from their circumstances, even when those circumstances could not be considered the results of moral choice. Sandel cited natural abilities and talents in individual agents which, under Rawls’ model, would become morally irrelevant unless the benefit could be universalised to satisfy the maximin rule. Another example of this kind of involuntary association with a particular circumstance would be family ties. Human beings generally tend to have close relationships with their parents and siblings, relationships which are also not chosen, and these relationships are also considered moral irrelevancies under the veil of ignorance. In Sandel’s account, no human being is able to practically distance herself from her own circumstances and relationships to such a radical degree as the veil of ignorance would demand at its most restrictive.

Sandel asserts that for Rawls’ original position to work as a means of understanding how human beings reason to moral conclusions, one would need a concept of the self which precedes any inter-subjective relationships and circumstances, and which precedes any particular projects which the self may develop. Such a model of the self, which must have some substantive qualities preceding any normative grounding, would be a self, in Sandel’s words, ‘without character, without moral depth’ and ‘incapable of self-knowledge in any morally serious sense’

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*Baynes, Grounds, 129.*
Though Sandel offers a strong criticism of several liberal assumptions about the nature of the self, they are in fact completely misplaced here. It can indeed be argued that the original position does not have such strong implications for the nature of the individual agent's 'self' as Sandel claims it does. The original position, as articulated by Rawls, is neither strongly prescriptive nor descriptive of human moral action or behaviour. As a Gedankenexperiment, a representational device of the Kantian categorical imperative, it is a rational test for moral principles, to determine whether or not these moral principles can truly be universalised. The original position is, as stated above, a cognitive tool in Rawls' pragmatic construction of Kantian principles of justice. Though it is not the best route toward reconstructing Rawls' argument (Rawls was not aiming to provide a construction of the 'self' but rather a model for universality), it does hint at a useful method for examining and critiquing the efficacy of Rawls' model of justice.

Further, according to Baynes, Sandel, in criticising the original position as implying a 'thin self', has engaged Rawls on the basis of moral psychology, and raised the question of whether it is possible to 'distinguish between certain capacities an agent has... and the exercise of those capacities in connexion with varying content and within different situations'. Baynes asserts that Sandel has failed here somewhat, in that he doesn't address this question of a moral psychology and has begged the question by assuming that only a model of individual agency that incorporates inter-subjective relationships, circumstances and individual projects can be seriously considered.

Baynes offers an interpretation of Rawls that depends on a clear distinction between what he terms first-order desires (individual circumstances and individual ends) and higher-order reflexive evaluations (the ability of agents to form, revise and execute concepts of justice and the good), and states that Rawls' theory of justice does not necessarily reduce the self into a 'simple weigher of preferences', as Sandel claims.
Baynes, directly addressing the issue of moral psychology, offers a hierarchy of desires and attempts to demonstrate the engagement with the higher-order reflexive evaluations by Rawls' theory of justice, on the basis of moral autonomy. The 'self' that is assumed in Rawls' model, then, would be not a 'simple weigher of preferences' but a 'self' with the higher-order reflexive evaluating ability to engage in questions of justice.

In his differentiation between first-order desires and higher-order evaluations, Baynes here exposes one of the flaws in Rawls' undertaking, and one of the ways in which Sandel's criticisms might have been better-directed. Baynes' interpretation of Rawls places him in the position of locating a neo-Kantian theory of justice entirely inside a (higher-order, reflexive) cognitive-constructivist framework. If any de-transcendentalisation of Kant which undertakes the task of re-conceptualising justice and morality is going to succeed in any meaningful sense, however, that re-conceptualisation will have to be more expansive. It will have to engage the individual agent not just at the higher-order level of reflexive evaluations but also at the first-order level of relationships and communication. Examining the elements of Rawls' theory of justice where the groundwork for his model-concepts is laid, it is unclear where he does this, if he does it at all. Rawls considers individuals capable of placing themselves hypothetically in the original position and arriving at liberal, universal principles of justice. Rawls also considers them in the model-conception of the agent as free, as equal, and (if Baynes' interpretation holds true) as capable of higher-order reflexive reasoning, and the theory of justice follows suit with this consideration. The assumption is made that since an individual subject's intra-psychic higher-order reflexive reasoning deals directly with organising and prioritising his first-order desires, merely engaging his higher-order

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18 Baynes, Grounds, 130.
reasoning with universal principles of justice will be enough to realise change in his first-order situations, and those of others.

If it was indeed Rawls’ intention to approach Kantian morality from a pragmatic, cognitive-constructivist perspective (as Baynes argues), it appears that he has met with extremely qualified success in this enterprise. ‘Justice’ is a concept inextricably linked to freedom, as the German idealists had keenly recognised. The word ‘justice’ connotes not simply a single agent’s cognitive state or method of reasoning, it is an exercise, a set of real demands agents make on each other. Thus, any discourse on ‘justice’ will have to account for actual, inter-subjective communication and relationships between agents. With this in mind, any real, actual and effective conceptualisation of justice has to be seen as one that engages the higher-order reflexive reasoning of a single agent in the Kantian sense, as well as the real, first-order political and social conditions which allow for the free expression and understanding of these communicated processes of reflexive reasoning. It is of marginal interest to analyse the cognitive workings of the universal principles of justice in a situation pertaining to, for example, a migrant vendor from the chronically-impoverished Anhui sheng or a livestock herder in Ye’erzhuang xiang – a purely cognitive theory is inadequate for dealing with the practical problems that they face and with what they would consider their actual needs in the context of a discussion of justice.

What else is needed, then? The universalised Rawlsian principles of justice may still apply, but to be actual and effective, the higher-order reflexive reasoning that occurs will need to have situational relevance to the political and social conditions in which all the agents who have an interest in the decision must work, not merely relevance to the cognitive state of the single agent making the theoretical moves toward that decision. In the interests of building a harmonious society, the migrant vendor and the livestock herder might be promised equality of opportunity and better access to their primary social
goods by a bureaucrat in the Chinese government (who in all likelihood will have very little in common with either), but at the end of the day, we will want to say that justice has actually been served when the land-use disputes between Hui Moslem medicine-gatherers and Han Chinese shepherds around Ye'erzhuang have been somehow dealt with to both parties' satisfaction, and when the economic conditions and quality of life for both the communities of Anhui sheng and for the migrant labourers have improved.

To use this example, inter-subjective communication and understanding have to take place within specific systems of value and under specific structures of law, both of which figure into the shared social background. This background is something which necessarily arises from the fact that human beings interact with each other in ways that require reciprocity and mutual recognition, not as singular agents equipped only with prudential reasoning. The background (in this case, for example) may include customs, habits and predispositions from Chinese folk tradition, values from Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism, et cetera, all of which will and should have formative effects on each agent's higher-order reflexive rationality, and on the ways in which that higher-order reflexive rationality is expressed. This shared background, in other words, in some substantial measure provides direction for 'the capacity [of an agent] to understand, to apply, and to act from... principles of justice' and 'the capacity to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of the good'. The background, or, to use the Hegelian terminology, the 'ethical life' (Sittlichkeit) of an historical community, is therefore crucial to understanding the relevant political and social communicative conditions under which agents must work.

Baynes, Grounds, 56.
This question considered, the cognitive acts which Rawls describes and around which he builds mechanisms have to be recognised as arising from the *shared background* of a socio-historical community. The 'justice' test for these acts of cognition will not be a cognitive *Gedankenexperiment*, but when they are actualised in *inter-subjective* acts of *communication*, for the process of their universalisation to have any effective reality. Rawls' top-down approach to questions of justice *will* and *does* work well among agents and among communities of agents who already are accustomed to working within strong social structures of communication, for whom there is a valid social context and for whom communication will be easier, but even in these cases the focus on cognitive acts is problematic. It becomes even more problematic, if the aim is rather to describe or understand problems of justice among different linguistic and political communities.

How is it problematic? The true irony of the basic Rawlsean model of justice is that, even though he comes to the table with the assumptions bound up in liberal-democratic social theory, the focus on individual cognition does not leave us in a position to seriously consider such fundamental elements of the social practice of liberal democracy as *communication* and *participation*. I, who have been entrusted by Rawls with the arbitration of Right and Wrong, can step into the 'veil of ignorance' and arrive at principles of justice that I say can apply to you or to anyone in my society, but as this process is still wholly intra-psychic I still have full decisive control over those principles and how they work. At no point in this process do I need to engage in actual recognition. If I don't make any kind of orienting reference to your individual situation, to your wants and needs, then what difference can I claim between myself and Napoleon Bonaparte? The urgency of this question should be evident, given the current situation of our involvement in the Middle East, and how questions are arising concerning the way in which communicative law in liberal democracy is supposed to work with the increasing
involvement of deeply religious and traditional Muslims in the politics of Europe and the growing potential for conflict between the conceptions of Sittlichkeit.\textsuperscript{32}

Indeed, how can universalisation be done, if higher-order reflexive reasoning is so dependent on cultural, linguistic and traditional formation? Rawls' \textit{Gedankenexperiment} either becomes irrelevant, or it is reduced to something resembling a charade whose use would be to confirm what the subjects who participate in it already know about the nature of morality. Universalisation can be represented in a particular agent's cognitive process by establishing theoretical, abstract norms, but it cannot be completed and realised in the social world in this way. Universalisation, in a complex world composed of many different socio-historical communities, has to be carried out through acts of inter-subjective communication, such that subjects can have grounds for understanding which values inherent in background customs, practices and traditions of particular socio-historical communities (which ultimately have their grounding in the social nature of human beings) can and should be extended universally.

Though Sandel's argument was misdirected and ended up misunderstanding Rawls to a significant degree, I believe that his intuitions regarding Rawls' theory of justice were sound. The Rawlsian experiment, particularly the 'original position', is an effective cognitive representation of universal norms. But Rawls takes the cognitive, intra-psychic model of justice as far as it will effectively go. Rawls, using the pragmatic thought-experiment of the 'veil of ignorance' in concert with the intuitions provided by reflective equilibrium, brings us to a point from which we can represent universality without necessarily drawing upon Kant's transcendental, metaphysically-burdensome 'fact of reason'. However, if what we want is to make universality (thus, justice) actual, it has to be established in a context that recognises human beings not merely as thinkers,

but as socially interactive members of real historical and political communities. At the end of the day, real Morality has to take account of the real interactions of human agents, and of the morally-relevant social and political structures which have formative and directing effects upon these interactions.
Thus far in this project, I have laid out the Kantian and Hegelian roots of the liberal-communitarian question, highlighting the salient questions about the nature of reason and freedom with which Kant and Hegel dealt and applying them to Rawls' theory of justice. Though I disagree with Sandel's argument insofar as he was attempting to critique Rawls' model of the 'self', I think Sandel's discussion of Rawls' theory of justice was useful in finding several of its flaws. Rawls' model attempts to preserve Kant's cognitive emphasis while divesting Kant's model of its metaphysical assumptions regarding human rationality. At the same time, however, Rawls' theory of justice does not put us in a position from which we can adequately account for practice, for the real structures and conditions in a socio-historical body politic through which agents can express, validate and apply their principles of justice. In the last section of this project, I analyse attempts to similarly re-interpret Hegel, in order to determine what elements of practice within a particular ethical community should be regarded as having normative weight.

Rawls is, after all, by no means alone in attempting to refine and adapt the fertile thought of German idealism such that the concepts involved do not lean so heavily upon metaphysical assumptions. The idealistic social philosophy of Hegel has been re-interpreted many times in the materialist tradition, most famously in Ludwig von Feuerbach's anthropological analysis of the roots of Christianity and in the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx. Contemporary communitarian thinking indeed owes a great debt not only to Hegel, but also to Marx, who seems to have anticipated the communitarian critique of liberal atomism in *The Outlines of the Critique of Political*
Economy, particularly in his own criticism of the liberal socio-economics of Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

In response to the Smithean idea of the 'Natural Individual', that human beings arise individually out of a 'state of nature' that precedes society (an idea which is also central to the social-contract theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and which had a significant influence on the liberalism of John Rawls), Marx makes the empirically-verifiable claim that '[t]he more deeply we go back into history, the more does the individual... appear as dependent, as belonging to a greater whole'. On a conceptual level as well, Marx takes issue with the Smithean idea that a human being's labour is undertaken with the primary purpose to satisfy her own individual needs, which he classes among the 'unimaginative conceits of the eighteenth-century Robinsonades'. Indeed, Hegel's idea of human labour being the source of self-realisation and a touch-point for social recognition (as expressed in Hegel's later work, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*) becomes absolutely central: the human production of goods is the means by which human beings actualise their own dignity amongst each other, in society. For Marx, human freedom finds expression in labour (the manipulation of environmental conditions, thus defined as a social phenomenon), the very ability which distinguishes the biological human animal from the rest of her kin.

Already in his more empirically-driven methodology Marx distances himself considerably from his German idealist forebears, and lays his finger on an essential truth in the importance of labour as both a social phenomenon and as a source of dignity. He also, in preference over the eighteenth-century Robinson Crusoe model, favours the social

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34 Honneth, *Anerkennung*, 146-147.

universe in a way that history and psychology appear to demand, which also seems to be a step in the right direction. There are, however, several major issues which arise from such a model, the foremost of which is that it creates a one-dimensional view of that social universe. Whereas Hegel evolves away from recognition as the core concept in a theory of social freedom toward a view which favours consciousness as the core concept, Marx goes in the opposite direction, toward a view which favours labouring activity as the core concept. The ways in which people identify themselves in each other seem artificially confined in Marx's view to economic needs and the value based on the goods that people produce. The master-slave dialectic and other such destructive sociopsychological phenomena, while their importance is retained in Marx's sociology, are also narrowly construed: even though the stakes in the internalised life-and-death struggles are the same (i.e. dignity and personhood), both 'dignity' and 'personhood' are identified primarily with control over the physical means of production. The ways in which motivations for social struggle are understood reduces and rationalises those real demands which arise into almost exclusively economic and material terms.

Even though Marx deals unreservedly with recognition in human interactions (and rightly so) by framing economic relations in terms of dignity and alienation, the narrowing of the ethical horizon in his empirical social models does force recognition to take a backseat to physical activity as the primary driving force behind freedom and selfrealisation. The re-conceptualisation that Marx makes with respect to Hegel's ideas, however, was the correct one, in terms of finding a more solid construction for them. Honneth, indeed, attempts to do the same: in the same way that Marx finds the social nature of labour at the roots of economic and material freedom, Honneth tries to establish different forms of communicative recognition at the roots of social freedom.
Honneth analyses and synthesises the early phenomenology of Hegel and the pragmatic psychology of George Herbert Mead, which he uses largely to give accounts of how socialisation occurs on an empirical basis. Mead details how social struggle and conflict (of the kind Hegel identifies in the master-slave dialectic and in the relationship between criminal and victim) arise, and how through such conflicts people become aware of their own legal personhood and begin relating to a 'generalised other', even in early childhood (for example) through the organisation of 'play' and the internalisation of norms. Honneth employs other psychological analyses of parental-filial love as the basis of development of the most elementary forms of individuality in infants (as the child's complete symbiotic dependence on the parent develops through the transitional experience of child and parent into a form of rudimentary independence), as expressed through the writings of Donald Winnicott, and integrates them into Mead's model. In this fashion, Honneth (as Hegel had attempted to do in his early Jena writings) traces out three distinct patterns of recognition: the constructive forms of recognition, like love, which are necessary for the most basic forms of self-knowledge; the protective, legal forms of recognition in the form of rights, which become necessary in the establishment of systems of value which individuals among larger groups can relate and apply universally; and finally, those forms of recognition which synthesise emotive care with cognitive universalisation, such as esteem and solidarity.

What Honneth tries to establish here is a normatively-potent critical social theory that adequately deals with psychological and historical reality while providing some answers to the questions Hegel was dealing with in trying to find an answer to the Kantian paradox. The important questions that should be asked at this point are,

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16 Honneth, Anerkennung, 77-79.
17 Honneth, Anerkennung, 98-100.
18 Honneth, Anerkennung, 128-130.
however, does Honneth's Hegel- and Mead-inspired social theory provide us with an adequately expansive (and credible) view of human freedom and self-realisation, and does it successfully transcend the limitations of feasibility that Rawls' *Theory of Justice* encounters?

In Rawls, a structure of reflective equilibrium, resulting in model-conceptions of the human being shaped and corrected by the 'veil of ignorance' exercise, provides the basis for a system of completely universalisable norms, resulting in a good representation of distributive justice. As discussed in Part III, Rawls' Kantian constructivism is admirable in that in it he establishes a pragmatic theoretical basis from which Kantian conclusions about reason and morality are able to emerge. At the same time, however, Rawls encounters some of the same pitfalls that Kant had. Rawls' intra-psychic account of the higher-order reflexive reasoning required to produce principles of justice does not leave the justice-concerned individual with any recourse in practice for determining the real demands of other justice-concerned individuals. The closest we come in Rawls' theoretical account is the internalisation of the 'veil of ignorance' that allows a person to cognitively establish other agents' rights to equal access to primary social goods, but at the same time this is still a completely internal reasoning process and has insufficient power to address real demands between agents, even inside Rawls' 'well-ordered society'. This brings us dangerously close to a 'Robinsonade' view of justice (if Marx's critique of Adam Smith may itself be employed here as something of a poetic conceit), that does indeed leave the individual human agent cast ashore on an island: the island of his own mind.

Thankfully, Honneth's critical theory addresses this particular shortfall directly, due to the fact that from the beginning Honneth was respecting and following Hegel's original intention of establishing a realistic theory which allowed for an adequate understanding of inter-subjective claims. The movement in Honneth's theory is always
to take one's own state of individual self-realisation, built by experiences of both constructive and destructive relationships within society, and employ the forms of recognition thus learned (both emotive care and rational respect for rights) in broader, more general and more demanding ways¹⁹, through communication. The result is a significantly-rethought version of Hegel's 'ethical life', the body of customs, habits and traditions that composes an ethical community, from which emerge developmentally-generalised norms which approach the Kantian ideal of universal Moralität⁴⁰.

Hegel's ultimate aim in sketching a possible recognition-based moral universe was to provide just such a broad and realistic description of human freedom, a freedom which is lived communicatively in society. His theory in Honneth's revision retains the theme (lost in the Phenomenology of Spirit) that communication precedes consciousness: the individual has a need to relate to and communicate with other human beings to understand even himself as a person with social rights or even as an independent being, and the psychological insights of Mead and Winnicott seem to bear this need out. Even in Kant's Critiques, there is the understanding that without this kind of self-realisation (which must be understood to establish even the possibility for responsibility and free will), there is no defensible support for the concept of human autonomy (Wille) and the moral imperatives to which it gives rise⁴¹.

The description of freedom and morality that emerges from this neo-Hegelian social theory does end up sharing a great deal in common with the description offered by Kant, and each member of a society will ideally, through communication and employment of expansive forms of recognition, generalise the values his society has fitted her with to a point where a universal Moralität can be realised. At the same time,

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¹⁹ Honneth, Anerkennung, 171-173.
⁴⁰ Honneth, Anerkennung, 176-177.
⁴¹ Pinkard, Idealism, 46-47.
though, the phenomenology which Hegel began and which Mead, Marx and Honneth
recovered and adapted necessitates a parallel movement in the social dimension, giving
freedom purpose and grounding in empirical human existence: the ‘ethical life’. Through
this parallel reconstruction of the ethical universe, Honneth provides a constructive
direction for a modified form of communitarian thinking, pushing the focus toward
communication and practice (particularly, those forms of communication and practice
which on the level of social psychology provide the individual agent with the tools
necessary to express her own rational processes and validate others’), rather than pure
consciousness, as the drive behind freedom. In employing this parallelism, the problems
in Rawls’ theory of justice in which a person’s moral thinking and higher-order reflexive
rationality are divorced from her real need for self-realisation as a social agent (and her
recognition of other people as having such needs), can be effectively addressed.

I argue that in both Marx’s and Honneth’s Hegel-inspired social theories, critical
boundary conditions of the ‘ethical life’ which are necessary for the realisation of freedom
for a political agent can be identified. Marx was primarily concerned with economic
freedoms and the means to achieving them, while Honneth was concerned with
communicative freedoms. Marx’s insistence on the social individual’s basic economic
freedom as expressed through autonomous labour must be balanced with Honneth’s
communicative-psychological freedoms expressed through affection, rights and esteem.
Thus, we must consider the normatively significant socio-political structures and
conditions of which we must take account in our discourse on freedom to be: those
which ensure individual economic sufficiency, those which encourage families and
communities as nexuses of emotive care, those which provide for a basic public order and
those which provide for and encourage true, empowering and democratic (in the sense of
δημοκρατία ‘rule by the citizens’) political dialogue and participation.
Marx, in the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, makes the famous demand that, if we truly concern ourselves with freedom, we must examine the conditions, the *modes of production*, which shape the 'material life' in which people labour (the 'base'), and which thus determine all other aspects of the 'social, political and intellectual life' (the 'superstructure')

\[46\] I believe it would be wise in our liberal-democratic era to make a parallel communitarian challenge to our current methodology of justice. Instead of merely examining the modes of production which shape the ways in which people labour, we must take Marx one step further and examine also the *modes of communication* which shape the ways in which people relate to one another. In examining and correcting our societal modes of communication, we may hope for a deeper understanding of social freedom.