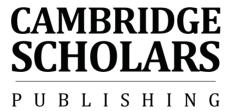# Reconsidering the Origins of Recognition

Reconsidering the Origins of Recognition: New Perspectives on German Idealism

Edited by

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SCHOLARS**

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INTRODUCTION

ARTHUR KOK AND JOHN VAN HOUDT

The central topic of this book, *recognition*, has been at the center of debates about German idealism in the twentieth century. Through several generations of reception of German idealist philosophers—from the first wave of reception, by commenters such as Charles Taylor, Dieter Henrich, Alexandre Kojève, etc., through a second wave of reception, e.g. Robert Brandom, Ludwig Siep, Robert Pippin, Axel Honneth etc.—there has been an increasing emphasis on the theme of 'recognition' for how we think about the themes of practical and theoretical philosophy, amounting to no less than what might be called a 'new paradigm' for philosophy. The aim of this volume is to present an overview of recent scholarship on German idealism comprised of promising researchers at an early stage in their academic careers.

This volume brings together for the first time a group of young researchers who can be seen as representative of a new generation of researchers working on German idealism. In this sense, the researchers presented in this book constitute the beginning of a 'third wave' of scholarship on German idealism. This third wave represents an international group of young talented researchers from plural traditions, trained in different fields and styles of philosophy, most of whom have just received their doctorates or are currently working on their dissertations.

This new generation of scholarship benefits from the combined research of previous generations but nevertheless presents their own perspectives on recognition theory. One of the original characteristics of the new approach is that the researchers come from plural backgrounds and take a multidisciplinary stance toward scholarship. Drawing from these various backgrounds, the new wave of researchers are able to overcome many of the classical boundaries that encumbered earlier generations, such as, the 'divide' between analytic and continental philosophy, or between Frankfurt School interpretations and more traditional scholarly approaches. This unique combination of methodological interests leads to a variety of original voices which incorporate the history of reception, while also

showing us how German idealism continues to inspire new generations of philosophers.

The pluralism of this new generation is expressed, moreover, in the ways in which they treat the subject of 'recognition.' Over the past few decades, an intensive, inspiring and fruitful debate about 'recognition' has taken place, yet that debate has been largely concerned with topics of practical, especially political, philosophy traditionally construed. That discussion, however, begged the important question as to whether recognition is a more fundamental concept relevant not only for understanding political issues but also for more theoretical concerns as well.

In this way, the present volume explores, diagnoses, analyzes and evaluates the prospects for and limits of recognition from a more fundamental perspective. This book provides a first step toward such a comprehensive conception of German idealism, through critical re-readings of classical texts of German idealism, approaching their argumentative potential, their internal development, and finally, their limits. Inevitably, this exploration should also be seen as critical of the present debate: Does it sufficiently incorporate the full scope and systematic nature of the way that German idealism deals with 'recognition' or what the theme itself warrants? The answer in this volume is 'no.' Instead, a more integrative, comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with 'recognition,' in a way that does justice to both how German idealists address recognition and what the theme of recognition itself warrants, would be an important contribution toward providing adequate solutions to the problems posed by recognition.

In the first chapter of this volume, *The Cognitive Significance of Recognition: Some Prospects for a New Reading of Hegel*, John Van Houdt argues that the Standard Interpretation of recognition based on a predominantly *social* articulation of the theme of recognition and role it plays within Hegel's project has played down, if not ignored, a crucial element of Hegel's conception of recognition, namely, its *cognitive* significance. Borrowing from recent literature on "cognitive significance" in the philosophy of language, Van Houdt argues that these same cognitive features should be seen as playing a role in Hegel's conception of recognition. Focusing more explicitly on these cognitive features of recognition, it is argued, would provide us with a more natural way of incorporating much of the previous treatments of recognition on the Standard Interpretation with Hegel's overall philosophical project without the tacit dichotomies which usually emerged on the explicitly social readings of recognition.

In chapter 2, *Hegel's sublation of recognition in the Phenomenology of Spirit*, Martin Sticker questions the common view of Hegel in contemporary debates, in which Hegel is regarded as a philosopher who strongly emphasizes the significance of recognition. Against this standard view, Sticker argues that Hegel, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, does not only show the importance of recognition, but also its one-sidedness. Hegel has a more critical and balanced attitude towards recognition than is acknowledged in contemporary exegetical and systematical debates. Firstly, Sticker analyses Hegel's characterization of the pure concept of recognition at the beginning of Phenomenology IV.A.

The analysis clarifies the meaning of the term "recognition" and provides a conceptual framework for the rest of Sticker's investigation. Secondly, he shows that the structure of recognition underlies many constellations of the *Geist*-chapter, which becomes especially clear in Hegel's treatment of the structure of the ethical life of the polis, and the dialectic of plural moral consciences. Thirdly, he discusses the one-sidedness of recognition, as elaborated at the end of the *Geist*-chapter. He argues that, for Hegel, the symmetrical recognition between the moral consciences is still deficient, because the consciences lack substance; in other words, an element that unites different consciences into an ethical community.

The development of substance is the subject matter of the Religion-chapter. Hegel is aware that recognition alone, even if symmetrical, is insufficient. From this, Sticker draws the conclusion that a philosophy of recognition based on Hegel should therefore ask: What does the development of the Religion-chapter add to the structure of recognition in the *Geist*-chapter? The answer, Sticker points out, is that it adds the structure of reflection, understood as a communal reflection on the ethical substance of a society.

In chapter 3, *From mechanism to freedom: the logical form of recognition in the Science of Logic*, Elisa Magrì deals with the topic of recognition by drawing a comparison between the *Science of Logic* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Although recognition is often regarded as the main principle of Hegel's political and social philosophy, Magrì shows that it plays a crucial role in the *Science of Logic* as well. She describes the genesis of the concept in the *Logic* as a process that was originally displayed and outlined by the relationship of mastery and servitude within the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Briefly mentioning the relevance of reciprocity in the *Phenomenology* and refering to the deduction of the concept in the *Science of Logic*, Magrì focuses on the process by which mechanism turns out to be the freedom of the concept.

Her approach is neither negative nor to to establish a correspondence between categories and *Gestalten*, since the notion of correspondence leaves unresolved the problem of the *meaning* of the processes involved. Instead, she aims to focus on the paradigm that underlies the genesis of the concept within the *Science of Logic* and that of self-consciousness within the *Phenomenology*. Magrì envelops the view that both the concept and self-consciousness are generated according to an identical process of self-actualization. This means that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* provides the *Science of Logic* with a fundamental insight, which may shed new light on the meaning of the *Logic* as the recognition of thought's self-activity.

In chapter 4, *Philosophie als Anerkennung der Religion und Kritik des formellen Denkens: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Hegels Theorie des absoluten Geistes*, Thomas Oehl critically assesses the well-known and popular thesis that Hegel has taught the *sublation* (*Aufhebung*) of religion in philosophy. Through a study of Hegel's late works (in particular the *Enzyklopädie* of 1830), Oehl shows that Hegel conceives of the relation between religion and philosophy as one of (reciprocal) *recognition*, accompanied by a philosophical critique of formal thinking. For this reason, religion is not overcome or made redundant by philosophy but presents a counterweight for thinking, which has an innate tendency to become contentless, which needs to be recognized in the interest of an adequate concept of truth. Oehl outlines the consequences of this conclusion for the overall conception of Hegel's theory of absolute spirit, which has implications for the conception of Hegel's entire system. Furthermore, Oehl discusses the question of which self-reflective concept of philosophical thinking comes within reach through the Hegel of Oehl's interpretation, and the kind of claims we have to put forward to challenge thinking to become self-critical and to enlighten itself.

In chapter 5, *Schiller's concept of recognition*, Emiliano Acosta offers a reconstruction of Schiller's concept of recognition as it has been presented in his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (1795). Acosta's reconstruction aims at convincingly showing that within the constellation of post-Kantian philosophy, Schiller's concept of recognition represents an original attempt to think of a model for intersubjective relations in which, not only the universal that inhabits all human beings, but also the singularity of each individual is recognized as something worthy of respect. In this sense, Acosta argues, Schiller's proposal essentially differs from the well-known conceptions of recognition in German Idealism (Fichte and Hegel).

Furthermore, Acosta outlines that Schiller's way of thinking of recognition is not only original in comparison to the attempts of his

contemporaries, but that it also possesses a critical potential with regard to contemporary ways of understanding recognition. His thesis is that both the original character of Schiller's conception of recognition and its critical power for re-thinking this topic today resides in two methodological strategies by which Schiller outlines this concept: the development of an aesthetical point of view based on the postulate of the primacy of "aesthetical" reason and the establishment of a logic of difference in order to deduce subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

In chapter 6, *Freiheit, Notwendigkeit und Anerkennung bei Schelling*, Emanuel John develops a Schellingian conception of recognition. In recent debates concerning the concept of recognition, it is mostly used to grasp social-philosophical problems, for example, in the works of Axel Honneth. However, in Fichte and Hegel, who prominently developed the concept of recognition, this concept does not function as a foundation for a descriptive or social-ontological theory. Instead it signifies a particular moment of the way in which human activity is reasonable and free, i.e., of the way in which human beings live according to self-posited laws. Although Schelling is not generally known for having developed a concept of recognition John's contribution develops such a concept, as a moment of every reasonable being's being-active, in the light of Schelling's representation of the relation between freedom and necessity.

Through this development different forms of the self-positing of the law, in which freedom and necessity are interdigitated, can be identified. Firstly, following Schelling's *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus*, the self-positing of the law can be thought of as self-constitution and self-realization. By reading the concept of recognition into this work of Schelling, John identifies the conditions of self-realization. Secondly, John argues that, starting from Schelling's *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, one can develop a model of self-positing the law which grounds the "System of the World" (*System der Welt*). Here, again through the concept of recognition, another point of relation as a condition for self-realization is revealed. By means of this (exemplary) analysis of freedom and necessity in Schelling's works through the concept of recognition, John provides an insight into the different perspectives and contexts within which concepts like self-positing of the law and self-realization become meaningful.

In chapter 7, *Labor, money, and recognition: a (post-)Hegelian outlook on meta-economics*, Arthur Kok focuses on the relation between Hegel's concept of recognition and the history of economics. This contribution explains how Hegel expresses this intrinsic ethical dimension of economic action in his reception of Adam Smith and investigates how his view can

be actualized in relation to contemporary economics. The first part of this paper briefly reconstructs this historical development of economics from a meta-economic perspective by focusing on the transition from political economy (Adam Smith, Karl Marx) to price theory (Léon Walras). Essential in this transition is the price theorist's fundamental criticism of taking market value as objectified labor time. In the second part of his contribution, Kok argues that unlike the concept of value in political economy, Hegel's concept of value in his philosophy of objective spirit is not incompatible with modern price theory. By showing how Hegel's concept of subjective freedom is the precondition of the "system of needs" and civil society, Kok reconstructs a Hegelian perspective on meta-economics that is favorable as compared to Smith's and Marx's value theories because it can be made compatible with price theory. As a result, it is possible—with some adaptations—to elucidate the reasonable foundation of modern economics with Hegel.

In chapter 8, *Beyond Intersubjectivism and Atomism: Self-property, Objective Recognition, and Children in Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Louis Carré deploys Hegel to overcome an opposition between two theoretical models of human personhood that has emerged in contemporary debates on recognition. The first model pretends that human personhood is constituted by recognition (I am a person only by being recognized by others), the second that human personhood exists independently of recognition (I am a person whether or not I am recognized by others). Carré's aim in this chapter is to show how Hegel offers conceptual tools to actually supersede the opposition between 'intersubjectivism' and 'atomism' by demonstrating the one-sidedness of each of those theoretical positions.

Carré does so by appealing to a distinction made by Hegel in the part of the *Philosophy of Right* on abstract right, viz. between intersubjective and objective recognition—the first functioning as a principle for right property on external things, the latter as a principle for self-property, i.e, the right of each human being to possess his body and life. After discussing a discussion of the anthropological difference between human beings and animals as to their relationship to their bodies and of the puzzling case of newborn children, Carré claims that the opposition between intersubjectivism and atomism can only be overcome if we accord priority to objective recognition over intersubjective recognition.

In the final, ninth chapter, *The limitations of recognition: the complexity of actualizing freedom in Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Stephan Hudson argues that there are several reasons why Hegel gives the theme of recognition less emphasis in the *Philosophy of Right*, as opposed to his

more significant discussions of the theme in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and the *Philosophy of Spirit* (1830). Hudson claims that these reasons are directly related to Hegel's attempt to show how freedom is best actualized in any particular state. Specifically, the first reason given for Hegel's sparse discussion of recognition in his *Philosophy of Right* is that after the stage of the master/servant relation—as discussed in detail in Hegel's *Phenomenology*—free spirit eventually comes to recognize itself as free, and this original mutual recognition is what is presupposed in the modern state.

The second reason given that Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* shifts focus away from explicit discussion of recognition is that here Hegel is primarily interested in addressing the immense complexities involved in the attempt to concretize and elaborate the social form of freedom that first appeared through mutual recognition. Hudson then gives two examples of such complex social and political issues, and argues that they are not best addressed by discussions of recognition. He concludes with an indication of an alternate method of approaching such issues from a Hegelian perspective, and recommends that a systematically contextualized understanding of reason should take the place of recognition in interpreting the *Philosophy of Right* and the issues it addresses.

THE COGNITION SIGNIFICANCE OF RECOGNITION: SOME PROSPECTS FOR A NEW READING OF HEGEL

JOHN VAN HOUDT

Introduction

In this essay I would like to explore some possibilities concerning the *cognitive significance* of "recognition" (*Anerkennung*) in Hegel. The theme of cognitive significance originally draws its roots from discussions of some puzzles that emerged in Frege's analysis of whether propositions containing co-referential singular terms could be non-trivial, that is, informative. Since that initial Fregean inspiration, however, the issue of cognitive significance has gotten new legs, for instance, in the work of John Perry (1993; 2001).[1] Hegelian recognition, however, is not often viewed along the same lines as the problems related to identification in this cognitive sense (though there have been some glancing references in that direction[2]). I see this as a hole in the literature on Hegelian recognition which would help to be filled by considerations of the cognitive significance of recognition (a broader concept than identification).[3]

Instead of the cognitive approach I will take in what follows, recognition in Hegel is usually taken as a species of social phenomena detailing the way in which situations populated by plural agents come to express certain other-regarding attitudes, properties, relations, or what have you, exemplifying a certain "recognitive" character. The model of symmetrical or reciprocal recognition under the label "mutual recognition" is usually taken as the gold standard for successful cases of such other-regarding behavior. Hegel is thus seen by recognition theorists reflecting on his account as advancing something along the lines of a proto-Wittgensteinian thesis about the primacy of social practices, or more broadly, 'the social,' for understanding the behavior of discrete agents interacting with one another as constitutive, say, of a "social space."[4] (In

fact, I see the notion of a social space as encouraging precisely the kind of view I'll be putting forward in what follows.)

In the next section (2) I will detail some of the main features of accounts of recognition following this generally social model of mutual recognition as what I'll call the "standard interpretation" of recognition. The standard interpretation certainly has its virtues, but what I think remains a problem of these views is the promiscuity of the various notions of the 'social' involved with the emphasis on a distinctively social conception of recognition. That is to say, it is difficult to establish precisely how to cash out the social orientation seen in Hegel by proponents of the standard interpretation with Hegel's project as a whole. Moreover, I think this exclusively social focus obscures some tangible features of recognition itself, specifically as concerns the implications of its cognitive significance, and there are more nuanced aspects of recognition that could be brought to bear on these accounts to further develop less promiscuous conceptions of the relevant social features of recognition. Such an account, one that picks up on the issues of the cognitive significance of recognition I hope, as a kind of promissory note, would be a welcome addition to the literature on Hegelian recognition.

Providing a fully fleshed-out account of the features of the concept of recognition in terms of its cognitive significance would be a much larger task than could be accomplished in this essay (much less drawing all the relevant connections to the standard interpretation). For this reason, I will settle for the more modest ambition of providing a sketch of *some* of those features; feature that could be used as raw materials for producing such an account of the cognitive significance of recognition in Hegel. What I propose in this essay then is to view recognition in Hegel according to some of the main features of cognitive significance which I will outline in Section 3.

In Section 4, I will take up a thought experiment of sorts to pick out the distinctively social ingredients of mutual recognition to show that even in the extreme case of a fully determined social body (say, one in which all parties recognized one another in explicitly the same way, picking out the correct right-making features in all of their beliefs and attitudes toward one another, and recognizing that they were doing so), there would still be room, indeed, a *need*, for recognition construed along the lines of cognitive significance. The prospects of such a reading will hopefully open a new line into the interpretation of Hegelian recognition.

1. The Standard Interpretation of Recognition

Theories of recognition drawing their genealogical roots from Hegel's writings are probably the most prominent feature of Hegel's philosophical project to enjoy contemporary philosophical currency. What we can call *the standard interpretation* promotes the distinctively *social* features of recognition to the status of the focus, the central core, of Hegel's philosophical project. This way, for instance, we can make sense of Hegel's historicist conception of reason as a version of the thesis of the social nature of rationality, as Terry Pinkard's (1994) important study would have it.

The standard interpretation, which is favored by current interpretations of recognition, differs from more traditional interpretations of Hegel which focused more exclusively on the metaphysical components of Hegel's philosophical project. Indeed, on the standard interpretation almost nothing remains of the traditional metaphysical story about some kind of supernatural entity labelled 'Spirit' or '*Geist*' coming to self-consciousness through the various features of its self-realizing emanation in the world. On the standard interpretation, Hegel is concerned with the conceptual features implicit in the interactions of concrete human agents in a social space of reasons, and not with weird metaphysical entities of the 'spiritual' sort. To use the language of the early reception of Hegel, the difference concerns how 'Right' Hegelian (metaphysical and even theological) or how 'Left' Hegelian (anthropological and social) we understand the core of Hegel's project to be. For recognition theorists, Hegel is decidedly a 'Left' Hegelian; and given the strangeness of the alternative, there seems no better game in town.

The theme of recognition plays an important role in this shifting emphasis from metaphysical to anthropological themes in Hegel. The standard interpretation of recognition focuses almost exclusively on the components of Hegel's project best suited for the kind of social interpretation called for by emphasizing the role recognition plays in Hegel's project (e.g. for the most part, disregarding the philosophy of nature or religion). On this model, mutual recognition depicts a paradigm set of relations, attitudes, or what have you, which characterize the normative statuses that reciprocally interacting agents have in relation to one another in virtue of their various sayings, believings, and doings.[5]

It is a form of specifically *mutual recognition* when agents recognize one another as being "one of us" in a way that allows them to hold each other responsible for the commitments that arise in undertaking such-and-such performance to the taking-true (belief) or the making-true (action) of

so-and-so state of affairs. Moreover, mutual recognition also designates the form by which the normative conflicts that inevitably arise in situations of plural agents over which pieces of information should be granted authority over these various undertakings of commitments to saying, believing, and doing, can come to reasonable resolutions for the agents concerned. Mutual recognition thus provides us a model for how these normative disputes arise and how they can be resolved: namely, in cases for which the agents participating in the dispute recognize one another as agents capable of making up their own minds as to what should "count" as a relevant consideration of the dispute, and not engaging in some asymmetric violent behavior, say.

This does not mean that all agents will agree all of the time. But as long as they agree about some things some of the time, and as long as they continue to agree on the *most essential* component of such exchanges—that other agents are agents, persons, or what have you, *entitled* to be parties to the dispute as fully paid up members of the royal 'we'—then we have the baseline recognition required for disputes to exemplify the decisively *normative* character of such recognitive conflicts (and not, say, the practical conflicts of the lifeboat scenarios that populate moral philosophy textbooks or Hobbesian "wars of all against all").

The relations of mutual recognition provide a baseline modicum of commonality among sets of plural agents (their putative 'we-ness') to get the distinctly *rational* character of normativity off the ground. This rational character of normativity on the standard interpretation is the core of Hegel's philosophical project, not just concerning recognition or his social and political philosophy, but overall.

We can make note of an impasse of sorts that we encounter regarding the scope of the interpretation given to Hegelian recognition on the standard interpretation. Since there is certainly a selection process of some kind (not always explicitly stated by a particular recognition theorist) involved with picking out recognition or its mutual variety for special attention, it can seem that these readings distort Hegel's original picture of recognition to the detriment of its interpretive accuracy. The impasse arises from concerns over whether the interpretive accuracy of the social nature of rationality, modelled after relations of mutual recognition (the standard interpretation), can do justice to Hegel's overall philosophical project. I propose, in order to avoid some of these concerns at the outset, a couple of interpretive fixes.

For the first fix, we can take "Hegelian recognition" to designate any theory of recognition that takes its primary features from Hegel's account in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977; cited hereafter as PS) and

elsewhere, whether or not the picture presented of recognition purports to represent Hegel's decided view on the matter, or whether the picture only provides a touchstone for developing a theory of recognition largely independent of Hegel's own views of the matter, even if that theory is constructed out of the raw materials of Hegel's conception of recognition (e.g. Hegel's paradigmatic emphasis on "self-consciousness"). This way we can talk about "Hegelian recognition" without always imputing some claim to interpretive accuracy to the view of recognition being offered.

The second fix I propose could be a way of presenting an "idealized" picture of Hegel. Borrowing an image from Howard Wettstein (2004: 11f.),[6] we can say that *even if* the view of Hegelian recognition on offer in the standard interpretation does not accurately represent Hegel's own views, it would be necessary to *invent* a Hegel that did advance something like that view. The idea is that someone ought to have thought principally along those Hegelian social lines, and it might as well have been Hegel himself. I put no particular stock in reading Hegel solely with an eye to accurately representing his views (at least, not in what follows), unless there are some features of Hegel's decided views on the matter that I take to be important in their own right, and which seem to be lost on the view of Hegelian recognition being presented on the standard interpretation. At the very least, whatever its interpretive accuracy, the 'Hegel' of Hegelian recognition on the standard interpretation "is a very useful character to have around" (Wettstein 2004: 12).

Now that we have our interpretive fixes in place, we can begin to nuance the picture of Hegelian recognition a bit as presented on the standard interpretation. There are quite a few approaches to Hegelian recognition that I've grouped together under the standard interpretation of recognition, a detailed review of which would certainly lead to some serious disagreements about the position that any one proponent of the standard interpretation holds when played off alternative positions held by other competitive accounts on the standard interpretation. There are far too many pictures of recognition sharing in aspects of the standard interpretation to provide anything like an exhaustive listing of even the main features of recognition for any individual proponent of the standard interpretation, much less for all of the proponents of something resembling that view.

Nevertheless a high-altitude survey can help to provide a slightly more concrete picture of what the proponents of the standard interpretation are after, and what they see as relevant concerning recognition for their general views of the social formation of human agents, as well as what they see as at stake in their particular views concerning Hegel.

To begin with we have Alexandre Kojève's (1969) immensely influential but highly criticized view of recognition as the structure of the interminable conflict of desires in contexts of plural agents. What is unique about recognition on this view is that it enlists a specific sort of desire, a desire oriented toward the desire of another agent, to provide a general picture of the recognition relevant behavior of desiring agents. Such an orientation to another's desire as well as the conflicts that emerge from behavior directed at eliciting or influencing another's desire, on Kojève's view, is constitutive of the emergence of distinctively human behavior qua 'human.' We are human in precisely the way in which we worry about another's desire; that we desire the recognition of the other in terms of her behavior towards us, and this desire for recognition motivates the set of behaviors we enlist to manipulate the other into altering her desires in relation to our own. The behavior following from the desire for recognition for Kojève would seem to be something like 'courtship by other means,' shifting the old slogan about politics as war by other means.

It would seem then, on Kojève's view, there is little room between the asymmetrical campaigns we take up in relation to each other's desires for the kind of 'mutual recognition' which remains the gold standard for ethical theories of recognition. Others, however, have noted that these manipulation strategies, and the conflicts they elicit, are of secondary importance as regards the relation of distinctively *mutual* recognition, a specific form of recognition which, it is said, is essential to Hegel's picture of recognition.

For instance, Jürgen Habermas (1973) has focused on the decisively *dialogical* (as opposed to "monological") character of mutual recognition. The interaction productive of individual communicative agents occurs primarily through the media of relations of love, language, and work. These three domains produce distinct value spheres in which agents participate in broadly non-strategic relations to produce a recognizable social arrangement among groupings of plural agents. Models, such as Kojève's, which privilege asymmetric conflict and forms of strategic action motivated by the desire to manipulate the desires of other agents are downstream from the non-strategic forms of interaction necessary for producing the kinds of fully-fledged individuals that could even participate in such conflicts.

By looking upstream to the interactive media in virtue of which individuals become individuals in the first place, we can discover those components of the "life-world" (Husserl's term) we originally inhabit as members of social groupings whatsoever in order to develop an ethics

modelled on the recognitive attitudes individuals mutually take up toward one another in non-strategic, expressive communication.

Likewise, Axel Honneth (1995) developed a view of recognition on which the normative content of our social attitudes, the attitudes we take up toward one another, can be based on the features of our developmental psychological constitution. The idea is that in order to get a better grip on what is of normative significance in recognition we need to look at the conflicts that emerge in more maturely developed social bodies as cases of "misrecognition" (paradigmatically disrespect). That is to say, we need to look at the developmental maturation processes individuals emerge from before they enter into such conflicts in order to see what downstream moral or normative features are relevant to normative conflicts. This will give us more traction for developing a critical theoretical approach to the normative disputes that emerge from social conflicts of various sorts, as the approach focuses on the deeper psychological constitution of all individuals rather than focusing on the precise points of contention in a downstream normative dispute, about the just allocation of resources, say. This way all cases in which mutually recognized relations become socially, juridically, and politically instituted can be viewed as coming about through the agonistic struggles for recognition in which the 'mutuality' of recognition designates the successful adjudication of those disputes.

Another conception of recognition taking its line of approach through a partly pragmatist, partly Sellarsian, partly Wittgensteinian tradition, favored by Robert Pippin (1989; 2000; 2011), Terry Pinkard (1994), and Robert Brandom (2002; 2007; 2009), focuses on the normative features of rationality to produce a wholesale reconstruction of recognition theory along the lines of the social practices we participate in as agents held responsible for the moves we make as participants in the social "game of giving and asking for reasons." This approach takes many aspects of the other approaches (or at least, holds many features in common, e.g. the "desire for recognition") but gives a characteristically *rational* overlay to the principally social story of the standard interpretation.

Where previous proponents of the standard interpretation tend to focus on the constitutive features of *being-an-individual* at all, that individuals come about in situations of plural agents, and that there are specific media or psychological mechanisms at work for the emergence of distinct individual agents with the relevant set of competences (paradigmatically, linguistic competences), and that these mechanisms are of normative significance; proponents of this social practice orientation focus on the *normative features* of recognition as species of norm- or reason-sensitivity.

That is to say, recognition principally details how the expression of our "normative attitudes" (Brandom) elicit responses between the agents participating in the exchange of reasons to institute normative statuses for the various ways of saying, believing, and doing things "around here." Mutual recognition serves as the paradigm for behavior expressive of these normative attitudes and the model of the rationality implicit in taking these instituted normative statuses in the relevant way, as sorts of normative facts.

This view of recognition maintains the same social emphasis as the views of recognition glossed above, but the focus shifts to what is required on the part of the parties to recognition to behave in the appropriate norm-sensitive or reason-sensitive ways in instituting normative statuses as the distinctively social statues that norms are. This view also retains the character of the conflict of recognition as part of the infamous "struggle for recognition" Hegel highlights in Chapter Four of the *Phenomenology*, particularly in the master/slave dialectic (PS §§178-196). But this struggle is taken to depict a distinct sort of conflict of a normative character; detailing how, in Pippin's wording: "our answerability to the world is inextricably bound with, even depends for its possibility on, our answerability to each other" (2011: 61).

Even painted in such broad brushstrokes, there are certainly some significant differences between these various approaches described above. One feature that immediately appears is that, except for some intuitive associations with what goes into "recognition," or the relations expressive of the appropriate sort of "mutuality" (usually described in terms of symmetry of relations, attitudes, etc.), these views do not seem to be in agreement as to what precisely recognition *is*: Is it an attitude, an expression of desire, a status, a relation, etc.? Is mutual recognition a structure of recognitive relations; a normative model of some sort; a fact about the relatively similar subjective takes on some desideratum by disparate individuals, etc.?

If we took a stand on any of these different constituents as pertains to recognition, all of these different ways of formulating the basic constituents of recognition would provide very different pictures of recognition, despite the common features of recognition in the standard interpretation as essentially a 'social' phenomenon of some sort that carries some normative weight for how we understand social groupings of individual agents.

Additionally, we have the pesky problem of how well these pictures match up to the account of recognition developed by Hegel. Most of these readings incorporate the raw materials of Hegelian recognition, principally

the conceptions of "desire," "consciousness," and "self-consciousness," from the *Phenomenology* to produce their preferred version of the recognition story (with the exception of Habermas who believes at this point Hegel was too far gone down the road to monological metaphysical systems, instead preferring the early Jena writings on recognition).

How well we see any of these readings of recognition on the standard interpretation as reflecting the Hegel original will be determined by the specific construal of the available raw materials and the way in which these raw materials are organized to offer an account of recognition. But insofar as proponents of the standard interpretation purport to be supplying the genuine Hegel original, this is a situation which certainly calls for some clarification, and that work of clarification, I think, can be done reasonably well by shifting the emphasis back to the cognitive significance of recognition, a theme much closer to the emphasis placed on "cognition" (*Erkennen*) by Hegel, especially in the *Phenomenology*.

I have stressed the commonality of the approaches to recognition as issuing in a "standard interpretation" of recognition. It now appears that we have too much plurality in the way this picture is developed in various ways to have much of anything that could count as a common view of recognition. Indeed, this plurality of interpretations has raised some concerns about whether the current state of the literature on recognition is altogether helpful for understanding recognition in general or how recognition features in Hegel's account of the same in particular.[7] There just seems to be too much diversity to these views to be about *one thing* ('recognition') or about Hegel's position on that one thing.

Part of the problem can be attributed to the ambiguity of the term 'recognition' itself, the disambiguation of which I believe favors a very different construal of some of the features of recognition than is given on the standard interpretation.[8] But I will not take this route here. Before moving on to the picture of recognition detailing its cognitive significance, however, it would be helpful to isolate how the diversity of positions concerning recognition on the standard interpretation can be informative about the constellation of problems the social model of recognition is supposed to solve.

So as a summation, there is certainly a good deal of diversity on the standard interpretation of recognition. Nevertheless I think there is a point of commonality among these various features. And the characterization of the traditional picture is helpful here. Leaving aside the question of which view of recognition best depicts the relevant social desideratum,[9] and focusing exclusively for the moment on the relationship of recognition theory on the standard interpretation to the interpretation of Hegel, we can

see that there is indeed at least *one* characteristic these views have in common. At the very least, it seems that the views of the standard interpretation are united, if by little else, in their rejection of the traditional, 'Right' Hegelian interpretation of Hegel. In rejecting the traditional picture with all of the attendant metaphysics of 'the Absolute,' 'the Concept,' the "*the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*" (Hegel 2010: 29), the coming to self-consciousness of self-realizing 'Spirit,' and the like, these views open up an important domain for the question: What fills in the gaps left in Hegel's overall philosophical project if we exorcise the ostensibly mysterious metaphysical components of that story?

I think the answer is clear. We replace the metaphysical components with a set of anthropological data: various forms of human desire and conflict (Kojève), the process of socialization into a linguistic community (Habermas) or the developmental psychological mechanisms productive of individuals as genuine, "respected" members of a community (Honneth), or the normative facets underwriting the rationality of the social practices individuals engage in within social contexts (Pippin, Pinkard, and Brandom). The social glue that holds all of these basic anthropological components together gets glossed as 'recognitive' in some way.

These accounts thereby can all be grouped together in the way the category of the 'social' (whatever we mean by that term) becomes the central bone of contention for what matters about recognition. But since just what task recognition gets called in to perform depends on the relevant conception of the 'social,' which constituents need to be pulled together on a given account, recognition will get a very different construal depending on the particular job it performs. In this way, recognition is a kind of social jack-of-all-trades concept which does various odd jobs depending on the explanatory or descriptive tasks, pasting or duct-taping (whichever the task calls for) the seams in the social fabric created by the hijinks of the basic constituents of the 'social.'

There thus seems to me plenty of room to develop the picture of recognition in any number of directions. The tack I proposed in the introduction, and I intend to pursue in what follows, will be to shift from the social focus of recognition presented in the standard interpretation to issues related to the cognitive significance of recognition.

Already there might be a worry that focusing on such cognitive themes will be a step in the wrong direction, a step backward to the kinds of individualistic or monological approaches to cognitive themes taken on an individualistic basis or the kinds of subjectivist models of the mind usually ascribed to Descartes. This worry then would be that Hegel labored a great

deal to get us out of that kind of picture of the mind by supplanting it with the kind of explanatory primacy of the 'social' that recognition was called in to develop. I do not want to take us out of the social paradise Hegel brought us to, but I will call into question precisely how far we should take that social primacy to the exclusion of those cognitive themes.

In Section 4 I will present a thought experiment to show that even if we subscribe to the ideal of a fully socialized individual there is still plenty of important cognitive work to be done by an, at least *potentially*, non-social conception of recognition understood in terms of its cognitive significance. (I think it might be better described as 'indeterminately' social, since it does not make explicit recourse to the category of 'the social' but could be so construed depending on the relevant picture of the social we apply, *pace* the standard interpretation.) Before moving on to that discussion, however, it would probably behoove us to get a clearer picture of cognitive significance in the first place, to which I turn presently.

2. The Question of Cognitive Significance

Before stating the position I think we should see Hegel as potentially taking up as to the cognitive significance of recognition, it might be helpful to provide some considerations about what I take to be at issue with the idea of "cognitive significance" in general, to motivate the reading of recognition I am proposing here. Firstly, we need to get some picture of Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology* so that the issues related to cognitive significance could be taken as a plausible element in Hegel's discussion of recognition. This will require that, secondly, we need to get some idea of what is meant by cognitive significance in order to draw the relevant connections between Hegel's project and the issues related to cognitive significance. Thirdly, and finally, on this picture of cognitive significance we will have the raw materials required to develop the view of recognition in Hegel tailored to fit the problems related to cognitive significance. The view presented here will mark an important point of departure from the standard picture of recognition, but I hope that once these motivations are sketched out, we will be able to better appreciate the potential relevance of these themes for Hegel's theory of recognition.

That being said, I will pursue a *minimalist strategy* for interpreting Hegelian recognition along the lines of addressing these three tasks. I propose *three moves* for isolating those aspects of Hegelian recognition which indicate a potential role that cognitive significance might play in

relation to recognition, even for the readings of recognition given on the standard interpretation.

The first move will be to connect Hegel's general picture of cognition with the theme of recognition so that issues related to cognitive significance can be seen as fitting within the overall argument of the *Phenomenology*; that is, so that something like cognitive significance might be considered a plausible feature of Hegel's account of recognition.

The second move will be to tie the issue of cognitive significance to the main feature that proponents of the standard interpretation share, namely, a general conception of recognition as the social glue holding the category of 'the social' together. This will take us into a discussion of cognitive significance more directly before we can make the relevant connection between recognition as social glue and recognition as cognitively significant. (In this section I will only give an indication of how cognitive significance might be relevant to recognition on the standard interpretation. In the next section I will explore this connection more fully by way of a thought experiment of a "social monad.")

The third move will be to combine the story provided by the first two moves with an overview of cognitive significance so that we have a criteria at our disposal for assessing the standard interpretation according to the thought experiment I present in Section 4 of the ideal of a fully socialized individual.

I call this overall strategy in three moves "minimalist" in that nothing like a strong, necessary conditional connection between cognitive significance and recognition for Hegel will be offered. Instead, the interests of such a minimalist strategy will be served if we can establish a connection between cognitive significance and recognition with a modicum of plausibility. Also, since most of the effort in this essay will be oriented toward establishing such a connection, there will not be much space for arguing along stronger lines that cognitive significance is essential to or inextricably linked somehow to Hegel's treatment of recognition (though neither will I discount the possibility that such a stronger connection might turn up in future research).

The first move. A good place to begin to sketch a general picture of Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology* is the Introduction which gives us the clearest ("clear" by Hegel's standards) indication of the argument put forward in the rest of the text, an argument that at a crucial point in Chapter Four will employ the conceptual figure of "recognition" to postulate the conditional status of self-consciousness. I will sharpen the picture a bit as we go along, but we can begin with Hegel's surmise that the "*the method of carrying out the inquiry*" into the status of

"*phenomenal* knowledge" (*erscheinenden* Wissen), that is, knowledge drawn from the specific features of consciousness, will be an "*investigation* and *examination of the reality of cognition*" (*Untersuchung* und *Prüfung der Realität des Erkennens*) (PS §81). I will be focusing on this latter concern, with the "reality of cognition," as it seems to have the most bite with regard to Hegel's overall aim in the *Phenomenology*.

To provide some more background to this claim, Hegel makes this indication of the aim of the *Phenomenology* in the context of jettisoning the typical metaphors for cognition as a "medium" by which information is transmitted from the world to the mind, as through a glass either clearly or darkly, more or less transparently, depending on the particular view we have about empirical content; or as an "instrument" by which the mind reaches out into the world by some mechanism or other to grasp the intelligible content of the world, capturing the world more or less accurately depending on the particular view we have about intelligible content.

On Hegel's recounting, the mind as receptacle and the mind as grabby-mechanism are more trouble than they are worth.[10] And for this reason, we should begin with the idea of "consciousness" itself, as the content-rich constituent of the mind upon which all of our claims about *cognition* ultimately co-refer as a criterion, in order to figure out what the "reality of cognition" would amount to.[11] The rest of the *Phenomenology* can be seen, according to its original outline, as an assessment of the specific features of consciousness that provide the raw materials for phenomenal knowledge: the knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) drawn from experience as raw sense data, the objects of perception, and the nomological features of the understanding, and those features inferred about the status of the conscious knower, the knower of phenomena, as self-consciousness and rational. The result of this examination will be, as we know, a specific concept of knowledge as such; what in the final chapter of the *Phenomenology* (§§788-808) ends with the conceptual structure Hegel notoriously calls "absolute knowledge" (*absolute Wissen*).

I will not give any detailed exposition of Hegel's conception of "absolute knowledge" (a monumental task in its own right), as that would go too far afield from the question of what role cognitive significance might play in Hegel's account of recognition. But we can detect in the trajectory oriented at the idea of absolute knowledge, beginning from the notion of phenomenal knowledge given in the investigation of the "reality of cognition," that Hegel sees the specific features of "consciousness" or "natural consciousness" as the core ingredients necessary for his conception of genuine knowledge.[12]

The point can be stated in the form of a wager. Hegel's wager is that whatever story we tell about consciousness—how objects figure into the content of consciousness in our transactions with the world—this story will provide, when applied to the relevant desiderata (Spirit, Morality, Religion), the constituents for an understanding of "knowledge" expansive enough to be called "absolute" (in some sense).

We can infer further from the trajectory Hegel takes toward this final goal that the evidence required to warrant such an expansive concept of knowledge will also be given in the examination of consciousness according to its specific features. This way Hegel bookends the story of phenomenal knowledge with a specific conception of knowledge as such. As Hegel states concerning the goal of the *Phenomenology*: "And finally, when consciousness itself grasps its essence [Wesen], consciousness will signify the nature of absolute knowledge itself" (§89), which in the end Hegel describes as *the goal* of the *Phenomenology*, "spirit that knows itself as spirit" (§808).[13]

The argument of the *Phenomenology* as the examination of the reality of cognition, bookended as it is between consciousness itself and the idea of absolute knowledge as "spirit knowing itself as spirit," seems to invite a connection between "cognition" (*Erkennen*) with "recognition" (*Anerkennung*) over and above the obvious semantic similarity. Indeed, "spirit" is the watchword for recognition for several proponents of the standard interpretation (as we will see more prominently in the next section).

To give more flesh to this relationship, in the paragraph preceding the shift to recognition in the *Phenomenology* Hegel mentions in a bit of foreshadowing that: "A self-consciousness, in being an object, is just as much 'I' as 'object.' With this, we already have before us the concept of *spirit*" (§177). This is a gloss on the proposition: "A *self-consciousness* is *for a self-consciousness*" (§177), which initiates the recognition story: namely, that when self-consciousness becomes an object of consideration, we have an object in parity with the status of being an 'I' as much as being an 'object.' And the opening sentence of the next paragraph contains probably the most cited proposition in the recognition literature: "Self-consciousness is *in* and *for itself* when, and by the fact that, it so is for another; that is, it is only in being acknowledged [or 'being recognized': Anerkanntes]" (§178).[14]

To connect this up with what was said earlier, if the *wider goal* of the *Phenomenology* is the examination of the reality of cognition, and it terminates in spirit that knows itself as spirit, then it would seem that if the idea of spirit gets its conceptual legs through the theme of recognition, it

would be incumbent on Hegel to tie recognition with the reality of cognition since this is the entire focus of the project. This way we have achieved the goal of the first move in our minimalist strategy; there seems to be some reasonably plausible connection here. Indeed, it seems that we are well on our way to getting the relevant connection between cognitive significance and the standard interpretation as per our second move. So let's take up the next move.

The second move. We need to know how "spirit knowing itself as spirit" could be warranted along "the way of despair" (*Weg der Verzweiflung*) (§78), as Hegel calls it, of the examination of the reality of cognition. As has already been mentioned, the idea of 'spirit' is one of the central features of the standard interpretation of the recognition story. But if this social conception of 'spirit' on the standard interpretation purports to be about Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology*, it needs to come about through the examination of the reality of cognition. This way we can tie two seemingly disparate features of Hegel's account together: the idea of knowledge as such together with a particular constituent of such knowledge 'spirit' or 'mindedness.'

From the overview of the standard interpretation of recognition we can already come up with a potential candidate for doing the gluing: *by looking at recognition*, which is supposed to provide the social glue, *in terms of cognitive significance*, which would account for the sense of the 'reality' of cognition in virtue of which recognition can do the relevant pasting job. This, of course, will depend on how we understand cognitive significance, and there is no prima facie reason to bring cognitive significance to bear on recognition, so we need to get clearer on cognitive significance to render this connection feasible.

To begin with an observation, cognitive significance has emerged within the philosophy of language, particularly problems related to how we understand the reference implied by propositions using co-referential singular terms (e.g. proper names) flanking the identity operator. The original contribution to this effort by Frege, and developed by Russell, preferred to focus considerations of reference on the grip our thoughts have on the propositions expressed by utterances and sentences. On this early model of reference, the primacy of thought over language served as the background for addressing the problem of the cognitive significance of such co-referential propositions.

Now it seems that the ordering has shifted, and the contemporary tendency is to view, following some threads in later Wittgenstein, language as a social practice prior in the order of explanation to the thoughts linguistic items are supposed to express: that meaning arises from

use (in our social practices) and not the thoughts we have before, or distinguishable within, the linguistic expression. Something of the same turn has occurred in the literature on Hegelian recognition which, as in the thesis of Pinkard's (1994) important study, takes this social priority to be at root in Hegel's account of the teleological, historical dimensions of reason; that, in effect, Hegel is advancing something like the thesis of the "sociality of reason."

In these stories, recognition is the core concept or even the "master idea" of Hegel's project.[15] Certainly the focus I will give to the role of cognitive significance for understanding the theme of recognition deviates in some important ways from this standard interpretation, since cognitive significance is less obviously a problem (depending on our theory of cognition) for those locating problems related to the significance of the referents of singular terms to the social linguistic practice of referring. But to see why this might be advantageous both for understanding Hegel's conception of recognition and for seeing the viable philosophical core of Hegel's project (at least in the *Phenomenology*) as the "*examination of the reality of cognition*," we need to find those features of recognition best suited for explication in terms of cognitive significance. That task in turn will depend on the picture of cognitive significance we have in mind while we explore the cognitive features of recognition.

While the idea of cognitive significance comes from the philosophy of language, especially concerning the Fregean problem of how statements containing co-referential singular terms (e.g. proper names) can be informative, I draw much the same lesson from Hegel's account of the conceptual content of the "speculative proposition" (*spekulativen Satz*) which Hegel plays off the "identical proposition" (*identische Satz*) in which the subject and predicate of a proposition are taken to be unified (§61).

The basic problem of cognitive significance is whether when we take an identity statement '$a = a$' and substitute another variable 'b' on right side of the identity operator yielding '$a = b$,' we gain additional information about 'a,' that is, whether the apparent difference between '$a = a$' and '$a = b$' is non-trivial or cognitively significant. The annals of twentieth century philosophy of language related to reference, definite descriptions, and singular terms are full of various approaches to this problem, and I do not attempt to add to this story here. Rather I will cherry-pick some specific features of cognitive significance that I see as pertinent to this problem of co-referential singular terms which I see as relevant for Hegel's story about recognition.