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Paul Ricœur and the Utopia of Mutual Recognition

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Abstract

This article situates *The Course of Recognition* in the context of Ricœurian philosophy and contemporary debates on mutual recognition. This article reconstructs the debate between Ricœur and mainstream recognition scholars, as well as with the other figures, such as Boltanski, Thévenot and Hénaff, who had a direct influence in the way Ricœur fleshed out his alternative conception of recognition. By connecting recognition with Ricœur's notions of ideology and utopia, we are able to uncover a major blind spot in the standard model of recognition,and to undo ideological and reified forms of recognition. Honneth and Ricœur both aim at societies whose members are duly recognized, but they do so in radically different manners. Whereas Honneth's model must be politicized in order to become relevant to social change, Ricœur evisages social change in a pure ethics of recognition.

Keywords: Agape, Gift, Honneth, Mutuality, Recognition, Ricœur, Utopia

Résumé

Cette article replace *Parcours de la reconnaissance* à la fois dans le contexte de la philosophie ricœurienne et des débats contemporains sur la reconnaissance mutuelle. Il s'agît de reconstituer les débats qui ont eu lieu entre Ricœur et le courant dominant de recherche sur la reconnaissance aussi bien que des théoriciens, comme Boltanski, Thévenot et Hénaff, qui ont eu une influence directe sur sa conception alternative de la reconnaissance. Nous soutenons qu'il existe une tache aveugle dans le modèle standard de la reconnaissance, et que cette conception alternative permet de se débarrasser des formes idéologiques et réifiées de la reconnaissance. Honneth et Ricœur aspirent aux sociétés dont les membres sont dûment reconnus, même si chacun l'envisage de manière très différente. Tandis que le modèle honnethien de la reconnaissance doit être politisé afin de devenir pertinent en termes de changement social, le modèle de Ricœur evisage le changement social sur le plan de l'éthique pure de la reconnaissance.

Mots-clés : Agapè, Don, Honneth, Mutualité, Reconnaissance, Ricœur, Utopie

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> Quant au lieu de l'utopie dans le langage, serait-il tout à fait inapproprié de dire que c'est encore la poésie? Et ne parlerait-on pas bien de l'utopie en la désignant comme le poétique du politique?[2]

The Course of Recognition *in the Context of Ricœur's Legacy*

What status should we grant to *The Course of Recognition*, the work that has put an end to the prolific production of Paul Ricœur?[3] We know for a fact that Ricœur was already in fragile health when he was finishing the book. He reportedly wasn't satisfied with its final form, admitting that he regretted having done "le tour de France en trop."[4] Can one also say that this was one book too many? Readers' responses to this question have been mixed. Even if Ricœur expressed concern for his alleged "tour de France en trop," Charles Taylor describes *The Course of Recognition* as "vintage Ricœur." Taylor's endorsement of the English translation reads "As with Ricœur at his best, [*The Course of Recognition*] suggests a number of wholly different ways of thinking our way through the major questions of modern philosophy."

Not surprisingly, Ricoeur scholars have echoed Taylor's enthusiasm and their efforts tend to explain its significance for Ricœur's philosophy as a whole. For instance, in "Vers quelle reconnaissance", Jean Greisch notes that Ricœur's initial anthropology, the one whose main works are *Freedom and Nature*[5] and *The Symbolism of Evil*[6], one can already find a connection with recognition, because every symbol is always already a symbol of recognition.[7] Greisch goes on to show that self-esteem is already a "figure of recognition" in *Oneself as Another*[8] and insightfully suggests that it is the seed of the later *Course.*[9] A second type of reaction comes from recognition scholars, many of whom adopt a Hegelian or Marxist-Hegelian standpoint. These scholars, and I will take Robert Williams as one example, seem surprised to see Ricœur give an account of recognition whose *terminus a quo* starts, both chronologically and thematically, way before Hegel, with recognition as identification, and whose *terminus ad quem* goes beyond Hegel. Their analyses tend to show that the Hegelian standpoint is still the best way (maybe the only way?) to address recognition. A third group of scholars are interested in developing autonomous investigations that use it in their models and claims. This is the case of Laurent Thévenot with whom one of the most fertile dialogues on the topic of recognition can be established. My aim will be to present and evaluate some of the views of these critics, and as a result, to return to evaluate the extent to which the *Course* is or is not one book too many.

Building on the insights of those readers of Ricoeur, I will conclude with my own interpretation of Ricoeurian recognition as a sort of ethical utopia. This "utopia of mutual recognition" will emerge as something that is not suitable to institutionalization, has less explanatory power if applied to collective identities rather than individual *ipseities* but,

ultimately, that can change our practices of recognition, even if it is by nothing more than the inspirational power of the good example.

Making Sense of the Course of Recognition

Many of the ideas that are at the core of this book are spread throughout Ricœur's earlier writings. While this is not the place to reconstruct those earlier claims, I can nonetheless mention a few elements that help to explain the specific nature of Ricœurian mutual recognition.

Recognition was, for Ricœur, a notion that announced itself for a long time, and that eventually had to become a book.[10] The same can be said of the occurrence of the word "recognition" in philosophical discourse: it is used from time to time but without much coherence among its different uses. Ricœur's book is therefore also the wager responding to that need. The book is far from being without reproach, but we should salute the boldness of the wager.

Ricœur places an enormous amount of importance in the notions of non-violence[11] and love, and in the way they can interfere with justice, establishing a dialectic that makes it possible that the "poetics" of love slowly refigures the prosaic, institutional practices of justice.[12] Our philosopher emphasizes the limits of a market-based approach, and insists upon the irreducibility of certain goods to that logic.[13] He also stresses that the respect we owe to persons must be placed above the respect for the law[14] and insists that each person is irreplaceable. Ultimately, for Ricœur, ethics is above morality, maybe even above politics. He includes ethical traits in his own account of identity as *ipseity* and makes ethical engagement the root of intersubjective relationships. This might explain why the *Course* develops a pure ethics of recognition.

Furthermore, this last book interacts in a decisive manner with *Oneself as Another*, in the way it radically transforms the concept of attestation into recognition and by adding memory and promises to the list of human being's capacities. For our purposes, we can retain from *Oneself as Another* the fact that Ricœur's standpoint is a philosophical anthropology putting the emphasis on capacities. Consequently, the recognition of "identities" does not unfold in his philosophy in the same way it can unfold, let's say, in a "politics of recognition" with multicultural tendencies. We know the classic objection posed to the demand of recognition of a collective identity (be it the identity of a cultural minority or the identity of a nation): we can tend to "reify" or to "essentialize" an identity, therefore forgetting that the only identity proper to these collectivities is precisely a narrative, changing identity. Furthermore, we also know that one of the problems of an approach of recognition is the way in which it can relate itself to justice, namely, if recognition is grounded on subjective or sometimes moral sentiments, and in case we are faced with contradictory claims for recognition, how can we decide between these competing claims? In other words, how can recognition turn itself into justice? Some authors, such as Michaël Foessel, have argued that a recognition of capacities, rather than a recognition of identities, is what allows to bridge the gap between the desire of recognition and the law.[15] Clearly, this is the type of recognition that Paul Ricœur defends.[16]

From a genetical viewpoint and in what concerns Ricœur's intentions in writing the *Course*, it is interesting to mention an interview he gave in 2004 to R. Hebding. His intentions are, in a way, pedagogic. In that interview, he states that if the book could be useful, it would be to

push the reader to ask himself what he is talking about when he is talking about recognition. In a way, Ricœur is therefore inviting us to better define what we mean by recognition.[17]

This analysis of ordinary language (with the help of the dictionary) and indications given by its use in basic grammar (in this book, the course from the active to the passive voice of the verb "to recognize") in order to find its philosophical relevance is indeed not new in Ricœur. For instance, this is also what he is doing, albeit, one could argue, with a superior degree of elaboration, in *Oneself as Another*.[18] In these two books, Ricœur is departing from the list of connotations that a word or an expression can have in a given linguistic community, that of contemporary French, in order to transcend the limitations of that particular idiom and find what can correspond to some sort of *transcendental* element in them, a philosophical relevance captured in the uses of that particular language but able to be *translated* into other languages, because it captures an essential dimension of our existence. So Ricœur doesn't ignore the differences between the many possible meanings of, *Anerkennen, Wiedererkennen, recognize, acknowledge, reconnaître* or *reconhecer,* nor is he trying to render absolute the meaning recognition assumes in French.[19] Rather, he is going from the acknowledgment of the specificity of the semantic field a word assumes in a given language and trying to see what all of us can learn from it.

This effort to refine the analysis of the concept of recognition intersects in a meaningful way with the works of several contemporary recognition scholars.[20] I will now turn to the reception Ricœur's book has had from Robert Williams, a prominent Hegelian scholar, in order to highlight, against the Hegelian backdrop, the specificity of Ricœur's approach.

Ricœur's Ambiguous Stance on Hegel(ianism)

One of the perplexities for Hegelian recognition scholars has to do with Ricœur's very particular reading of Hegel. After all, what could be more bizarre for a Hegelian than a position that describes itself as a Post-Hegelian Kantianism? Wasn't the purpose of Hegelian *Vernunft* to go beyond the divisive nature of Kantian *Verstand*? While this is not the place to settle these matters, a proper understanding of *The Course of Recognition* requires a few words about his reading of Hegel.[21]

In 1974 Ricœur had already arrived to some of the conclusions concerning Hegel's significance for the history of philosophy. In his article "Hegel aujourd'hui"[22], our philosopher notes that history contains elements that can not be absorbed by the Hegelian system. The singularity of events can not be predicted. Ricœur's philosophy is hermeneutical, which is to say, a philosophy of *finitude*. "Je crois à une différence irréductible entre un projet philosophique qui s'appellerait philosophie de l'interprétation, et l'hégélianisme : l'interprétation est toujours une fonction de la finitude. Parce que je ne connais pas le tout, c'est du milieu des choses, du milieu des discours, que j'interprète et que j'essaie de m'orienter. Je demeure un point de vue fini sur la totalité."[23] Given this impossibility of a retrospective view *from above*[24], Ricœur pleads for a return to Kant and the notion of *limitation*; the whole can only be perceived from within, through a given perspective. Even in the domain of human action or practical philosophy, this position has obvious consequences. Freedom must be, according to Ricœur, understood from the limited point of view of an existence that knows itself to be finite and therefore open to the uncertainty of risk, the vulnerability of being touched by evil and the inescapability of the tragic of action. As a result, what do we have left? The answer is a philosophy of *hope*, a refiguration of human action through the power of the possible. In 1974, Ricœur concludes by saying that between

hermeneutics and Hegelianism, one has to choose. In Ricœur's eyes, Hegel could only be "saved" if we took him to be a philosopher of interpretation himself, one that had made only a finite history of the recollection of meaning at a given point in history, a history that could be rewritten at any given later point of its development. Consequently, Ricœur voluntarily defines his philosophy as a "philosophy without Absolute", following the footsteps of his friend Pierre Thévenaz.[25]

This standpoint would become even sharper in the third volume of *Time and Narrative*, written in 1985. In the chapter "Renoncer à Hegel" Ricœur attacks the Hegelian philosophy of history, saying that we can not, by any means, equate the *Stufengang der Entwicklung* and the eternal present. "La sortie de l'hégélianisme signifie le renoncement à déchiffrer la suprême intrigue."[26] To avow this finite nature of human comprehension means that Hegel himself was doing nothing more than interpreting himself the course of human history. But this is not, and Ricœur measures adequately his words, an argument against Hegel. To avow it, is also at the same time to avow that we do not think like Hegel, but *after* Hegel. And Ricœur does not celebrate this condition, nor strives militantly to disavow Hegel. Instead, he takes it like a wound and talks about the work of mourning that we have to do vis-à-vis of Hegelianism: "Car quel lecteur de Hegel, une fois qu'il a été séduit comme nous par sa puissance de pensée, ne ressentirait pas l'abandon de Hegel comme une blessure, qui, à la différence précisément des blessures de l'Esprit absolu, ne se guérit pas? A ce lecteur, s'il ne doit pas céder aux faiblesses de la nostalgie, il faut souhaiter le courage du travail de deuil."[27]

By choosing not to follow Hegel all the way through to Absolute Knowledge, Ricœur limits himself to the conflict of interpretations and renounces the attempt to explain and understand everything.[28] He thereby recognizes a residue of opacity and irreconcilability in all human existence. He is also striving for creativity in philosophy, trying to address the different philosophical problems by recurring to different explanatory procedures (after all, *expliquer plus c'est comprendre mieux*). The result is that his claims, often borrowing from different and conflicting philosophical traditions, are frequently paradoxical. Many an orthodox thinker from a given philosophical tradition, be it phenomenology, psychoanalysis or structuralism, has rejected Ricœurian philosophy as being too confused or self-refuting. In the present context, I will try to shed some light on the famous post-Hegelian Kantianism that Ricœur shares with Eric Weil. He famously states:

> But the Kantianism I wish to develop now is, paradoxically, more to be constructed than repeated; it would be something like a post-Hegelian Kantianism, to borrow an expression from Eric Weil, which, it appears, he applied to himself. For my own part, I accept the paradox […] chronologically, Hegel comes after Kant, but we later readers come from one to the other. In us, something of Hegel has vanquished something of Kant; but something of Kant has vanquished something of Hegel, because we are as radically post-Hegelian as we are post-Kantian. In my opinion, it is this exchange and this permutation which still structure philosophical discourse today. This is why the task is to think them always better by thinking them together – one against the other, and one by means of the other. Even if we begin by thinking something else, this "thinking Kant and Hegel better" pertains, in one way or the other, to this "thinking differently from Kant and Hegel," "something other than Kant and Hegel."[29]

This is a bold claim. Ricœur is acknowledging that the philosophical debate that shapes Modernity is the one taking place between Kant and Hegel. He assumes the paradoxical nature of his enterprise, but he nonetheless wishes to integrate features from both Kantianism and Hegelianism in his autonomous philosophical project. These considerations will of course be partly misunderstood, partly rejected by those arguing from a Hegelian standpoint. An interesting and very challenging reading of the Course, coming from this standpoint, is the one made by Robert Williams.[30] Williams, the author of an excellent book on Hegel and recognition,[31] describes the *Course* as an important but "baffling" book. He rightfully notes that Ricœur omits the major classical literature on recognition in Fichte and Hegel. This is an obvious flaw in the book, and Williams is right to point it out. One could argue that the most important Ricœurian claims on Hegel and Hegelianism had already been made in his previous books (position that I summarized above), so that he could refrain from delving into the details. But Williams has noted that his omission of the other classical literature on Hegelian (and Fichtean) recognition is ironic because, interestingly enough, his interpretation of recognition as gift-exchange is strikingly similar to the Fichte's *Aufforderung* (usually translated in English as "summons"). This interpretation is not without merit, because this notion of "summons" in Fichte indeed assumes the character of an injunction that invites the other to respond but does not necessarily force a response. Thus the emphasis on giving and demanding that something should be given in return to us, in order to reinforce the relation (let's note that we're always talking about *symbolic* gift-giving and not necessarily the exchange of actual goods or commodities), but that this return is not obligatory is, as we shall see, very close to Ricœur's own proposal. Williams is right to point this out, but there are other important critiques he addresses to the *Course*.

Williams also points out that Ricœur's reading of Hegel is puzzling,[32] because he "interprets Hegel through Kantian categories of community and reciprocity."[33] For Williams, "to interpret Hegel through Kantian categories, which are structured on judgment, is a gross misreading."[34] Thus it all comes down to post-Hegelian Kantianism, in the abovementioned sense. Williams notes that "in spite of Ricœur's defense of mutual recognition, his view is more modest than Hegel's."[35] This is true, as it is true of mostly any other comparison between Hegel and Ricœur; ultimately, as Williams rightly remarks, this quarrel is a metaphysical or ontological one. "Experience of mutual recognition is not illusory, the I does become a We, but this "we" is not *Geist* in Hegel's sense."[36] This leads him to ask: "Where is the ontological and conceptual "beef" as it were that substantiates the claimed mutuality and relation?" and to conclude that "If pluralism were unsurpassable, this suggests that the ontological separation of subjects must also be final."[37] Ricœur would therefore fall back in the "atomism" that Hegel so vehemently denounced and rejected. Williams closes his review with a bit of humor, stating "Having previously been renounced and mourned by Ricœur, Hegel must be smiling, waiting for him at the end of the course of recognition."[38] From this, it is clear that Williams would also dispute the Ricoeurian claim at the end of *Time and Narrative* that we do not think *like* Hegel, but *after* Hegel.

Williams' criticisms have the merit of identifying important questions that can be put to Ricœur: how can we integrate dissymmetry into mutuality? If the ontological separation between individuals is final, is mutuality even possible? Here I will venture to provide a short answer to these questions. First of all, I think that from a Ricœurian standpoint, the first answer would itself be a question: do we really have to think mutuality in ontological terms? Even from the standpoint of a reception of Hegel, do we necessarily have to inherit the burden of Hegelian

metaphysics when rationally-reconstructing those parts of the Hegelian system that we find productive for our own inquiries nowadays? Choosing not to do so certainly is turning Hegel upside down and probably "betraying" his spirit, but probably this is the only theoretical escape for someone recognizing the validity of many of the Hegelian analyses without being Hegelian *tout court*. Even a certain "naturalization" of Hegel is possible, as Honneth has shown with his use of Meadian social psychology in *The Struggle for Recognition*[39], in order to reconstruct Hegelian recognition in purely post-metaphysical terms. There is no *a priori* reason, as I see it, to be forced to think social integration, or intersubjectivity, in strictly ontological terms. Our descriptive evaluations do not need to have the strong character of ontological claims. Ricœur was, especially in the later phase of his career (from *Oneself as Another* onwards), a bit suspicious about ontology. His philosophy is a philosophical anthropology that starts with the description of human capacities and that only ventures into ontology after having gone through the very large explanatory mediations provided by the philosophy of language, action, ethics and of the social sciences. This does not invalidate, as such, the efforts to try to reconstruct an ontology of relation in Ricœur, as Marc-Antoine Vallée recently did.[40] Rather, what I am arguing is that 1) the intersubjective link does not *necessarily* have to be ontological and 2) that Ricœurian philosophy should be understood, in strictly Kantian terms, as a plurality without a totality.

Call it humility, but Ricœur refuses to cross the border of totalization and to allow himself a view from above. In his philosophy, the self is intrinsically relational, he wouldn't be capable of understanding himself without the component of alterity that passively affects him or herself, but simply put, Ricœur thinks intersubjectivity first and foremost from the individual standpoint. That's the reason why "recognition of oneself" comes before "mutual recognition" in the *Course*. This happens for phenomenological reasons: I don't have access to the other's inner consciousness, only to mine. Even if my identity is constitutively formed by the interaction with the other, it is still my identity, not his or hers. Mutuality is never, for Ricœur, some sort of state of fusion. His framework is still the web of individuals and only in a derivative sense, the problem of collective identities. This is true even if other important Hegelian features are recovered in his anthropology, for instance, the notion of *Sittlichkeit* in the ninth study of *Oneself as Another*. *Sittlichkeit* will be, for Ricœur, instrumental in the way he conceives the significance of thick ipseities that are narratively constituted.

In short, I will say that Ricœurian philosophical anthropology emphasizes individual human agency but this is not tantamount to saying that it is a form of atomism, far from it. This does not lead to egoism. Solicitude is the dialectical counterpart to self-esteem and one can not be understood without the other. But being in relation with others, even if this is an essential relation that constitutes us, does not erase our particular identity. It forms it, to be sure, but my thick identity and my access to my own consciousness remains what it is: mine, and only mine, even if this is the identity of an *ipseity* ethically formed and an identity that is nothing more than the identity of oneself as another. In conclusion, Ricœur, in the *Course* is a Post-Hegelian Kantian as elsewhere in his writings. His positions are sometimes paradoxical. But he doesn't fail to give an articulated and productive account of human action. The acknowledgment of finitude and the hope placed in the possibilities of transformation provided by the action of the capable human being are at the core of his proposal that we will now compare with Honneth's.

Similarities Between Ricœur and Honneth on Recognition

In the chapter "Hegel at Jena: Anerkennung"[41] Ricœur is mainly following two studies: Honneth's *Struggle for Recognition* and Jacques Taminiaux's *Naissance de la philosophie hégélienne de l'état*.[42] The attentiveness with which Ricœur read these two books is proven by the personal copies of the books we can find at his library, now at the Fonds Ricœur. They are heavily underlined and commented on the margins. These comments are interesting from a genealogical point of view, if we are to understand the parts that Ricœur emphasized or rejected. They enlight us on the way Ricœur, who developed a powerful theory of reading and who often paid homage to his philosophical counterparts and acknowledged his theoretical debts, conducted himself his own readings. I won't go into the details of what we can find in these notes, except for a small remark below on a schema we can find in his copy of *La lutte pour la reconnaissance*, but I think they are not without interest.

To my knowledge, Ricœur didn't read the later works of Honneth. Even the attention given to the *Struggle for Recognition* can be explained by the 2000 translation of it into French. It is true that Honneth's reception in France, which is impressive nowadays[43], was probably the result of this translation. In the meantime, Honneth's thought had already evolved, by 2000 he had already moved to a more institutional standpoint on recognition.[44] But the main point is that Ricœur probably somehow felt that in a topic in which he was not himself a specialist, he could rely on Honneth and Taminiaux as his two mentors.

I won't be able to render justice to the complexity of Honneth's model of recognition in this small section,[45] instead I will only outline its main features in a schematic way, so that we can see the specificity of Ricœur's model vis-à-vis Honneth's. In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth reactualizes Hegel's concept of *Anerkennung* providing a tripartite model of recognition. Recognition unfolds, according to Honneth, in the spheres of Love, Rights and Solidarity. In each of these spheres, one is able to develop a positive relation to self, respectively self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. With this schematic framework in mind, let's proceed to the comparison of the two models.

In some ways, these two projects are very similar. In fact, Ricœur constantly reminds us of how much he owes to Honneth's account of recognition.[46] Both authors want to take thick identities into account and both are opposed to excessive procedures of formalization or "proceduralism."[47] For them, individual identity is always dependent on intersubjective interaction. Thick identities form a web of intersubjectivity. Both authors criticize Kant on this matter, claiming that autonomy is always decentered, that is, dependent on heteronomy.[48]

They both make of suffering a central topic in their reflections. Ricœur, on the one hand, describes the "acting and suffering" human being, while Honneth, on the other hand, analyzes the many forms that the lack of recognition can assume, under the forms of disrespect, humiliation, social invisibility, denigration, reification, and so on. In these reflections on suffering, they are rejoined by Emmanuel Renault.[49] In this respect, the "negative" moment is essential in any conceptual or historical development of recognition. The reaction of indignation toward experiences of disrespect really becomes the motor of history.[50] Here it is interesting to note that on the first page of Ricœur's copy of Honneth's book, he wrote a schema of the negative, in which he lists "*la méconnaissance*" and "*le mépris.*" This is precisely what the capable man had to face in the course, "*de la méprise au mépris*"; I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of a small note, but I do take it to suggest some of the importance that he attached to the mobilizing power of the negative, as a defiance and a call to the action of the capable human being.

In spite of the many similarities between the two projects, there are also very fundamental differences. First and foremost, we must say that Honneth is more radical than Ricœur. In Honneth, recognition is an overarching concept. This was already the case in *The Struggle for Recognition*, but it becomes even more explicit in his debate with Nancy Fraser.[51] The case is not the same for Ricœur. Even though recognition is a fundamental concept for him, it is by no means an overarching concept. One obvious example is the way in which each of the authors envisage the relation of forces between knowledge and recognition. Honneth goes so far as stating that recognition precedes knowledge, insofar as any purely detached cognitive relation to an object or the world, so the claim goes, is only possible after an already recognitional primary relation to one's surroundings has already been established. In this, Ricœur has an exactly antithetical approach, placing recognition as identification (literally, re-cognition) conceptually before recognition of oneself and mutual recognition. For Ricœur, we can only recognize (in the sense of identifying) what we already knew beforehand.

But the most important topic is probably the one focusing on the nature of mutual recognition. In a handwritten note to his unpublished conference "Comment j'ai entrepris ce parcours de reconnaissance",[52] Ricœur spells out his expectations regarding the last part of his book: "Ce que j'attends: - clairière, expérience rare mais effective; - confirmer que [la] motivation morale des luttes pour la reconnaissance n'est pas illusoire; que [la] réplique à Hobbes est non seulement fondée mais donne horizon [aux] états de paix." Why isn't the moral motivation of struggles for recognition illusory, according to Ricœur? Because we can attest that actual experiences of mutual recognition exist, in the form of clearings (and therefore we know that we're not struggling for an empty ideal) and because we can assume that it is possible to expand them. This indicates a horizon of reconciliation. But this horizon is, as I shall argue, only a utopia. Honneth, on the other hand, takes recognition to be an attitude or an action, not a symbolic gesture. For Honneth, we have an ideological use of recognition each time there is a promise of recognition (on behalf of a person, an enterprise or an institution) that can not or will not be fulfilled, and when recognition is used as means of social domination. For instance, the head of a company can force its workers to abide by the rules (work more, give up rights, etc.) in virtue of a promise of recognition: the head will tell them that it is an honor to work with us, that they'll be part of a team, and so forth. This is precisely one of the features of the "new spirit of capitalism", to borrow Boltanski's words. Capitalism has been able to convince people to collaborate, and recognition can be one of the tools used in this undertaking. According to Honneth, the problem of these unfulfilled, maybe even structurally impossible, promises of recognition is that they are merely symbolic. They do not provide the material conditions for real recognition. We can note, in passing, that this is a first point of disagreement between Ricœur and Honneth on recognition. For Ricœur recognition is of the order of the symbolic gesture, for Honneth, it pertains to effective material realization.

Significantly, they also have very different conceptions of infinity. All those who have studied the topic of recognition in Honneth and Ricœur know by heart Ricœur's famous objection to the model of the struggle for recognition: "When, we may ask, does a subject deem him or herself to be truly recognized? (…) Does not the claim for affective, juridical, and social recognition, through its militant, conflictual style, end up as an indefinite demand, a kind of "bad infinity"?"[53] My claim is that Ricœur considers the model of the struggle of recognition to be ideological. The subject who demands recognition is a selfish subject who accumulates recognition like the capitalist accumulates profit. The subject doesn't know when to stop and is

never happy with what has already been achieved. Therefore, in order to set himself free of this ideological stranglehold, Ricœur will propose the utopia of a mutual recognition. This utopia will precisely be built upon a noncommercial good: recognition.

In a still unpublished interview I conducted with Honneth in Lisbon, Honneth stated that he doesn't believe the struggle for recognition falls into a bad infinity. Recognition has an inbuilt normative surplus which will never be fully institutionalized. So, even if the demand for recognition might be infinite, this turns out to be a productive infinity. It amounts to nothing more than a permanent demand on ourselves to make things better. Honneth adds that he feels that what Ricœur had in mind in posing this objection were the "big" struggles, those that make up the decisive social movements that shape society, whereas he himself is much more interested in the panoply of situations of struggle that are present in our everyday interactions. The kernel of Honneth's response is therefore that the infinity of the demand of recognition is the exigency that we permanently place upon ourselves to make things better for us and for others, in society. This strikes me as a claim as fair as they come. What I want to suggest, though, is that there might have been a misunderstanding between Ricœur and Honneth on this topic and that they are actually in agreement on this point.

Love, Asymmetry and Mutual Gift-giving

By all accounts, the other decisive influence on the *Course*, besides Honneth's *Struggle for Recognition*, is Marcel Hénaff's masterpiece, *The Price of Truth*.[54] According to Hénaff, gift-giving is to be reciprocal. He doesn't want to give an account of the moral, disinterested act of giving without expecting anything in return. Rather, he is interested in giving an account of ceremonial gift-giving as an act of reciprocal recognition, which is, according to him, at the core of the social bond. His breakthrough is the following: by giving something, the giver is investing himself in that which he gives. This is, on his view, what makes the specificity of human communities, contrary to the acts of gift-giving that we can find in the experiences of interaction of the communities of the great apes, whose ethology he investigates. According to him, the gift is neither purely free nor purely constrained. On the one hand, not being the moral disinterested gift, the giver can legitimately expect something in return, but only insofar as this is the *sine qua non* of the existence of the social bond. Of course, the one who receives the gift may not want to give anything back, and one is free to act accordingly. But, this will amount to a disintegration of the bond. The giver, in the act of giving, is *defying* the other to respond. In this way, the gift is *symbolic*. Hence, it is because the gift is, up to a certain extent, free, that it enjoins the other to respond. This is not, primarily, a matter of the goods exchanged. And let's recall that it is not the same object that is given in return. It is a matter of the relationship of mutual recognition that is established. By recognizing the other, I enjoin the other to recognize me in return.

Ricœur will definitely follow Hénaff in his own account of mutual recognition. In depicting "states of peace" and "clearings of recognition" as an alternative to the paradigm of the struggle for recognition, Ricœur is most certainly following Hénaff's own suggestion in a footnote of *The Price of Truth,* where he notes, in passing, that what is missing in Honneth's approach is an "ethology of the encounter" [*ethologie de la rencontre*] in the context of an anthropology of the gift.[55] For Hénaff, this relationship of recognition [*rapport de reconnaissance*] is precisely opposed to the Hegelian struggle for recognition. Nonetheless, Ricœur does not follow Hénaff in all his claims. Hénaff is very prudent in his use of the expression "economy of the gift",

which Ricœur uses several times. For Hénaff, to want to replace capitalist market-driven exchanges for something such as an "economy of the gift" would make absolutely no sense. This is not what Ricœur wants either, but he expressly connects his critique of the omnipresence of market logic to his notion of an economy of the gift. Hénaff also disconnects in a decisive manner the moral gift from the ceremonial gift. According to him, the purely detached gift, of which he finds the perfect example in Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, loses the dimension of the defiance and the injunction to reciprocity that founds the social bond. Therefore, he is not primarily interested in the moral gift.

Ricœur, on the contrary, will challenge this radical uncoupling. His reading, it seems to me, is halfway between the moral gift and the ceremonial gift. Ricœur pays special attention to the second part of *The Price of Truth*, the one dealing precisely with the gift. In a small text called "Considération sur la triade: 'le sacrifice, la dette, la grâce' selon Marcel Hénaff" Ricœur formulates the following hypothesis: "on peut se demander si la moralisation n'est pas la voie sur laquelle l'une ou l'autre de ces expériences-témoin s'arrachent aux limitations culturelles qui en constituent l'historicité et ainsi s'élèvent de l'historique au fondamental."[56] In fact, Ricœur interprets Hénaff's account of the "challenge" to give in return as containing, *in nuce*, a moral metaphorical power capable of universalizing this ceremonial device, even if ceremonial recognition has largely disappeared from our present-day societies. Ricœur's response, then, is that *every gift being as if it were a first gift* – that is, a *moral gift* – this is what grants symbolic, ceremonial gift-giving the nature of a transcultural symbol. So, even if ceremonial gift-giving has lost its importance in our societies, this doesn't mean that the festive experience of recognition, which still exists in practices different from those of archaic societies, has lost its power. In fact, it can still be considered as a metaphor, a symbol, of a transcultural experience of *real* recognition. This is his utopia of recognition. And it is to the effectuation of this utopia, in the form of "clearings", that Ricœur calls the states of peace, under the banner of agape. His conclusion in this small text is: "On se rappelle combien Hénaff est soucieux de disjoindre le cérémonial du don de sa moralisation. Le régime de la grâce, à mon sens, tend plutôt à les réunifier."[57]

The final part of this section will deal with Ricœur's very specific notion of mutuality and how it is distinguished from reciprocity.[58] Here we will develop the notion of states of peace. In his *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*,[59] Luc Boltanski adopts a standpoint similar to the Ricoeurian approach to love and justice. According to Boltanski, justice is incapable of stopping violence by its own means. Peace excludes the use of any violent means to settle a dispute, that is, every confrontation that can ultimately lead to the destruction of one of the parties engaged in the conflict.[60] Following the traditional distinction of love into *philia*, *eros* and *agape*, we can have different engagements according to each of these three forms of love. The one that is most pertinent here is agape. Boltanski characterizes the general attitude of those in these states of peace as the "silence of equivalence."[61] That is to say that justice is always measuring and comparing, looking for reciprocity. In a state of *agape*, by contrast, there is a certain *insouciance* characterizing the social bond.[62] Agape doesn't remember either the offenses made against it or the deeds accomplished. Its complete indifference to any sort of scheming is one of its main features. Boltanski refuses to consider agape as a utopia, and it is easy to understand why: if it is to have any sociological relevance, the state of agape must exist, if only in a partial and imperfect way, in practice.[63] Therefore, he rejects those interpretations of agape that make of it a mere regulative model of conduct.[64] He follows Ricœur's accounts of the phenomena of metaphor and parable (mainly in *The Rule of Metaphor*), therefore implicitly recognizing the poetic content of the

depictions of love, but insists upon the pragmatic character of the situations described in the parables.[65] One of the most interesting features of Boltanki's depiction, though, is that agape is disconnected both from desire and from the merit of those who are its object, as in the example of the Fioretti: those who are in a state of agape spread love to all those they encounter, whoever they are.[66] They give without expecting anything in return, and they don't even anticipate the future (they have no expectation, so they have no desire). They simply concentrate on the needs of those they encounter, trying to provide for them.

Certainly, not everybody is in these states. People can inhabit other cities, or orders of standing. The possibility of misunderstanding thus arises: when the person of love interacts with the person of justice, they interpret each other's actions differently. This is a way in which the desire can reenter this sphere of exacerbated love: if, for some reason, there is a disruption in this relation – let's say that the receiver rejects the gift of the person of peace – then one can, faced with this difficulty, *desire* the other to accept the gift.[67] But in so doing, one will already be leaving the logic of pure love, according to Boltanski. Pure love is immediate, absolutely concentrated in the present and ignorant even of any abstract idea. Those in this state focus themselves on the concrete others that they encounter. This is a purely horizontal relationship of gift-giving, with no vertical dimension. Love makes no distinction between these concrete others; everyone, from the criminal to the most virtuous man, is its object. In sum, for Boltanski, in states of agape: 1) everyone is the protector of those that are encountered; 2) love is free from anxiety because the one who gives expects nothing in return; 3) even the receiver of the gift doesn't expect anything because the receiver is in this state, free from anxiety (and therefore, if one receives, one can only be *grateful*); 4) this state naturally tends to equality (even though without calculation): those who have more tend to give more, because they have it; 5) This feature is so extreme that no one accumulates goods in a selfish manner. People do not worry about their future; 6) Even production has as its only goal the satisfaction of the immediate basic vital needs, nothing more; 7) the insistence upon the present is so great, that the past (and possible past debts) are not taken into account. Boltanski's conclusion is that, in such a regime, it is necessary for everyone to remain disinterested. Consequently, no economy is possible in that world.

Ultimately, what can we say about this depiction of a state of peace? First of all, that even though it is anchored in real, empirical experiences (love always resurfaces, albeit partially, in one way or another, in society), Boltanski's reconstruction of the perfectly coordinated state of peace is perfectly utopian, and he himself acknowledges it. Boltanski and Thévenot's sociology of action considers the different regimes of engagement in which people are involved, in different degrees and different situations. Hence, even if love is not everywhere at all times, its practices still exist and form a sphere of meaning. This dual structure of the states of peace – having an empirical ground in everyday practices *and* a normative surplus of meaning that projects them as a kind of utopia or regulative ideal – is, I contend, what we will find in the Ricoeurian approach of recognition in the states of peace.

Ricœur will not retain all these elements of Boltanki's model of agape, nor will he contend that in the clearings of recognition people behave like Boltanski said they would in his reconstruction of a utopia of agape. In his depiction of a state of agape, Ricœur will consider that the dialectic of love and justice can be mediated by the symbolic gift-exchange. Reconstructing the long debate that has taken place around this notion by anthropologists such as Mauss, Lévi-Strauss and Hénaff, Ricœur ultimately arrives at his distinction between reciprocity and mutuality.[68] His point of departure is the same as Walzer's: we live in a society where we've

achieved, more or less, an equal distribution of rights, but not an equal distribution of goods.[69] And we tend to resist, up to a certain extent, the encroachment of the commercial sphere.[70] Some goods are nonvenal. Ricœur notes that history shows us the recurring defeat of that which is without price (every teacher demands a payment), so he prefers to speak of "noncommercial goods" such as moral dignity or the integrity of the human body.[71] Recognition will be taken to be a good of that nature: a non-commercial good. Therefore, his utopia of mutual recognition, as I see it, will also be a utopia of the redistribution of recognition.

The most curious distinction that Ricœur establishes is between reciprocity and mutuality or, as he calls it, between "good reciprocity" and "bad reciprocity."[72] What is reciprocity? Ricœur places it in a semantic field close to the notions of justice, equivalence and the market. "The marketplace, we could say, is reciprocity without mutuality."[73] Its main feature is the emphasis on the impersonal, systematic relation. As such, reciprocity is blind. I think this appreciation might be close to the Ricœurian account of Kantian moral law: it is blind too. Ricœur puts the value of the person above the respect for the law. In talking about mutuality, he is also emphasizing the importance of the persons engaging in concrete interaction, over and above the systematic nature of the relation binding them. Mutuality focuses on the persons, reciprocity in the relation.

And this is the point where the notion of dissymmetry becomes fundamental. Ricœur sees a threat in taking reciprocal recognition too far. He is probably accusing all Hegelian forms of recognition of falling into this trap. The one is not the other. "Forgetting this asymmetry, thanks to the success of analyses of mutual recognition, would constitute the ultimate misrecognition at the very heart of actual experiences of recognition."[74] Here, it is worthwhile to mention an article by Laurent Thévenot, in which he links his own project with Ricœurian and Honnethian recognition.[75] Without entering into all the details of his account, I want to mention that Thévenot goes even further than Ricœur. In speaking about the constitutive asymmetry of recognition, he speaks of the "double dissymmetry" of love.[76] The loved one depends on the lover, insofar as the lover recognizes in the loved person a value that was foreign to the loved person. The lover seems to know and to recognize the other even better than the other knows and recognizes him or herself. In the experiences of true love, we might add, sexual or otherwise, even if one experiences the communion of some sort of fusion – and in this there is some sort of horizontal recognition – the truth is that there is also a sense of verticality, in that each person values the other above him or herself. Thus true love is like a naturalization of Augustine's confession: *Tu autem eras interior intimo meo, superior summo meo.*

Ricœur doesn't go as far as Thévenot in this matter. But he emphasizes that each person is irreplaceable. We exchange gifts, but not places.[77] This is why there is no obligation to give a gift in return. Reciprocity would force a return: *do ut des*. In mutuality, by contrast, respect and distance is introduced into intimacy.[78] Therefore, I feel motivated to *give*, that is, to *recognize* the other by means of my symbolic gift in which I am myself engaged (in this Ricœur follows Hénaff), and this is a voluntary act: "Undertaking to give a gift is the gesture that initiates the whole process."[79] The other, upon receiving this gift, is therefore not forced but called to respond (here's the similarity with Fichtean *Aufforderung* that Williams rightfully detected). Let's recall that this is disinterested gift-giving: we're in a state of agape. In this sense, as Boltanski noted, there is no remembrance of the past. A gift that would demand a return wouldn't be a gift: it would be market economy. On the contrary, a successful gift, in this sense, forgets about itself in the own act of giving. So the gift in return is a "second first gift." I might add that it is not

necessary for the gift to *really* forget itself: it might be enough that we simply don't attach so much importance to it. If someone has a debt, it is oneself rather than the other. Ricœur notes that in order for this mutuality to be possible we should emphasize the right way to receive, and this is by becoming grateful (*reconnaissant*). It is gratefulness that, as some sort of a moral sentiment towards the person that engaged him or herself in the gift given to us, does not force us, but rather enjoins us to respond, and recognize the other that has already recognized us: "A *good receiving* depends on gratitude, which is the soul of the division between good and bad reciprocity."[80] Ricœur calls such exchanges "festive."[81]

By introducing this notion of the festive, Ricœur is recalling the small gestures of recognition present in our everyday lives. These are the proof that the struggle for recognition really strives for something that exists.[82] They are the empirical rooting of this approach, which can be qualified as being ideal-typical, in the Weberian sense, in that it simultaneously looks for conceptual precision and empirical exemplification.[83]

A Hopeful Utopia

The time has come to define the status of Ricœurian recognition. As we've seen, his interpretation of mutual gift-giving as a process of symbolic recognition is halfway between the ceremonial and the moral gift. What is Ricœur doing, when he denounces the "unhappy consciouness" or the "bad-infinity" of an all-demanding subject? In a way, he is saying that before demanding recognition, we should happily grant it. Want recognition? So recognize. Recognize, before demanding recognition for yourself. By introducing dissymmetry into the heart of reciprocity, Ricœur is not only affirming the gap between people. He is also saying: put the other before yourself. And if the "small miracle of recognition" shall be granted to you, act gracefully: be grateful. And, if possible, recognize in return (not that you're obliged to do it, but if you don't, as Hénaff shows us, you will be breaking the social bond). Consequently, in a certain sense, Ricœur is proposing an asymmetrical, *altruistic* relation of recognition whereby the other assumes a certain verticality: I must recognize the other first.

This verticality does not make the other inaccessible. The ceremonial character of recognition presupposes the possibility of horizontal experiences of interaction. However, amidst this ceremonial character, Ricœur is constructing a pure ethics of recognition. Therefore, recognition also expands the *little ethics* of *Oneself as Another*. In a way, in the *course*, solicitude is placed above *ipseity*. This reminds us of the hyperbolic ethics of Emmanuel Levinas. In a certain manner, I think that what is at stake is the definition of a new figure in Ricœur's anthropology: that of the altruistic subject. The human being is capable of being altruistic, and of recognizing. And this recognition might become inspiring. This, of course, presupposes that recognition can assume a volitional character. Instead of striving for the recognition of my identity, what I should do is simply recognize others. Honneth understood well this aspect of Ricœurian recognition[84]: what Ricœur has in mind is a volitional, unilateral act of recognition, even though this act too calls for a response. For Honneth, this is never possible without a previous relationship of reciprocal recognition. In sum, this debate is over the point of departure, as noted earlier in my response to Williams. For Honneth, reciprocal recognition always precedes individual identity. Thus, any volitional act of recognition has a process of reciprocal recognition as a *sine qua non*. For Ricœur *ipseities* are also intersubjectively grounded, but the individual identity of the person is not lost within it, nor are its capacities to act in an intentional manner. This makes the moral, intentional act of giving and recognizing his initial standpoint.

What is original in Ricœur's approach to recognition is not only the effort to find the philosophical relevance of the "rule-governed polysemy" of recognition. In addition, his criticism of the all-demanding subject (who, like the capitalist, wants it all) denounces a market ideology possibly present in the model of the struggle for recognition. Over and against this ideological stranglehold on the discourse about recognition, he proposes his own utopia, an ethical utopia of recognition, driven by hope.

How can this attack on the model of the struggle for recognition be of help? On the one hand, it helps us to get rid of reified forms of identity. Honneth has expressed concern with these degenerate forms too, by denouncing the attitude of a purely "detectivist"[85] approach towards one's identity. By insisting that identity is not sameness but *ipseity*, and that it has a narrative, changing character, as we've seen earlier and also that what we should strive for is the recognition of *capacities*, not reified identities, Ricœur certainly is providing a good service to recognition theory. His insistence that the capacities are individual and that individual *ipseities* have a certain precedence over collective identities points in the same direction. As Appiah notes, an identity provides us with a script that is important in the orientation of our lives. But we want our lives "not too tightly scripted."[86] Thus the importance of the emphasis put in the changing character of identities.

As Ricœur has shown in his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*,[87] both ideology and utopia make up our social imaginary. Ideology has a reproductive function, whereas utopia is productive imagination at work. The status of this critique of the dominant discourse on recognition thus takes on the status of a utopia. And this is not only because it gives new meaning to the concept of recognition but also because it projects a possible alternative social order. Ricœur takes actual experiences of recognition as his point of departure, however his goal is to *enlarge* the spheres of mutual recognition. These are horizontal, mutual experiences of gift-giving and symbolic gestures. Ricœur talks about the gestures of exceptional individuals, like Willy Brandt or Martin Luther King Jr., who can inspire other people. The symbolism of gestures of recognition is very important to Ricœur. Honneth doesn't ignore it either: it is, for instance, a gesture of recognition, mere sympathy, that can prevent the horrible experience of social invisibility.

For Ricœur these symbolic gestures are the basis of the act of recognition. He seems to expect that the gestures of exceptional individuals can spread to the whole of social reality "Such gestures, cannot become an institution, yet by bringing to light the limits of the justice of equivalence, and opening space for hope at the horizon of politics and of law on the postnational and international level, they unleash an irradiating and irrigating wave that, secretly and indirectly, contributes to the advance of history toward states of peace."[88] Yet, it is not easy to see how that reality can come about. These gestures, that Alain Loute called "excessive gestures", associating them with the notion of courage[89], are difficult to understand. On the one hand, even if exceptional individuals can inspire, it is up to "normal" individuals to take up the task of enlarging the spheres of mutual recognition. On the other hand, as Loute rightfully notes, it is not even sure that the symbolic dimension of this gesture is going to be well understood in the first place.[90] Moreover, even if it is understood, it will still be necessary that we actively decide to emulate it "Pour qu'un tel geste transforme notre désespoir en espérance, il ne suffit pas d'imaginer ce possible, il faut encore décider de se l'approprier."[91] It is not enough that we contemplate the beauty of the gesture and let ourselves get carried away, dreaming about it.

Utopias are beautiful, but they must also mobilize us. Loute recalls us that what we need is a collective appropriation of that possible.

Well, the problem is that these gestures, and the procedures of mutual recognition as such, seem only to be able to touch those who are closest to us or who come across us. This contagion is individual. Moreover, it cannot be forced. Does this mean that it is inchoative? In my view, both Ricœur and Honneth's projects of recognition have an inbuilt normative character. This normative character does not mean a set of rules coming from nowhere and opposed to reality. Rather, they reflect a set of already-existing social practices and senses of justice in our lives. But inasmuch as both Ricœur and Honneth envisage social change, inasmuch as their social philosophies condemn injustice and conceptually analyze the need for recognition, they have *in nuce* the normative expectation of an expansion of those already-institutionalized practices. Theirs is a project of improvement and expansion of existing practices. Earlier I mentioned some misunderstandings between Ricœur and Honneth. Ricœur seems not to have understood that in Honneth this surplus of meaning of recognition also prevents it from being fully institutionalized. Honneth, on the other hand, is not denying the existence and pertinence of volitional, one-sided recognition. He is just saying that it isn't fundamental. Ultimately, I would say that they have much more in common than is usually acknowledged. Both envisage the possibility of a society whose members are duly recognized.

In 1992, when he wrote *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth probably would have left the task of bringing about a society whose members are duly recognized for the action of the social movements. Today, he is perhaps paying more attention to the institutionalization of the practices of recognition and to our democratic ethical life. He is, however, very prudent in what comes down to the distinction between the role of the citizen and that of the theoretician, whereas I tend to agree with those interpreters, like Emmanuel Renault and Jean-Philippe Deranty, that tend to try to politicize his theory of recognition. Ultimately, even if we conceptually define the "decent society" as Margalit does, or the "recognized society", the empirical situation tends to be far more complicated. This society might not be more than a regulative ideal, a utopia. But it is a utopia that we must strive to accomplish. Ultimately, both Honneth and Ricœur seem to be saying to us, albeit in different ways: when it comes to recognition, we can't only talk the talk. We'll have to walk the walk. If we want recognition, then we should struggle for it (Honneth) or grant it (Ricœur). These two approaches might be the two sides of the same coin: struggling for recognition at the political level and recognizing others at an ethical level.

Ricœur is prudent enough not to state that this horizon of reconciliation shall be definitive. He only speaks about the "clearings" of recognition. It is in these that he finds the festive character of recognition. This means that these clearings are provisional states of conciliation, amidst the conflict: in this case, as elsewhere, his philosophy is driven by a dialectic of conflict and conciliation.[92] This means that we have to think about what David Pellauer calls "peaceful conflict", that is, forms of conflict that do not involve violence. [93] Maybe these might be arbitrated by the procedure of compromise, such as it appears in the works of Boltanski and Thévenot.

Conclusion

Ultimately, I think Ricœur's proposal is edifying. His utopia is anchored in the hope that step by step, individuals will start acting more ethically. As such, this utopia has the character of a hymn. I will end this article with a perplexity. Might it be that a very modest effectuation of this ethical proposal be tied with the destiny of the reception of this book? We can never anticipate what the reception of a book will be, nor the success of its author. Many a genius only had posthumous success. For instance, Fernando Pessoa, the greatest of Portuguese poets, published scarcely during his lifetime, and was widely acclaimed posthumously. As such, the fate of *The Course of Recognition* remains unknown. However, there can be no denying that this analysis of recognition has reshaped our understanding of it. As such, the world of this work is colliding with our worlds, the worlds of its readers. Our world is therefore refigured by it. We become aware of the existence of this possibility and it might just be that, little by little, we start acting accordingly. Therefore, Ricœur's project will only be able to influence social change in an indirect way, through the mediation of the reception of his book and through the hope that the gestures of recognition become contagious. As is well known, ethics is an optative. It is not enough to be a specialist in ethics to start acting better. Rather, we still need the *motivation* to act accordingly. This motivation might come from the indignation stemming from the experiences of injustice. But if we are to overcome them, we also need a positive ideal. Will Ricœur's *The Course of Recognition* help us in our evolution towards a better society? Let's *hope* so. And while hoping, let's also not forget to *struggle* for that ideal.

[1] An earlier development of this paper was published in Portuguese, "O que seria um reconhecimento sem a exigência de reciprocidade? Levinas, Ricœur e a utopia de um reconhecimento centrado no outro" in *Emmanuel Levinas: Entre Reconhecimento e Hospitalidade*, org. Maria Lucília Marcos, Maria João Cantinho e Paulo Barcelos (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2011). My first systematic comparison between Ricœur's and Honneth's models was made in "Ricœur, Critical Theory and the Utopia of Recognition", a paper presented at Oxford, in the 2010 International Society for Religion and Culture Conference, in the Critical Theory Panel organized by Todd Mei (September 2010). This final version of the paper benefited from the research period spent at the Fonds Ricœur during the months of January and February 2011, where I had the chance of consulting Ricœur's personal library, extensive secondary bibliography and also the scarce unpublished material (consisting mainly of notes and conferences) on recognition. I wish to thank Catherine Goldenstein, Olivier Abel and Johann Michel for the warm welcome in Paris and also for the many informative discussions on Paul Ricœur and his philosophy. I must also thank Johann Michel and Scott Davidson for the many comments and revisions of the text, from which the final version obviously benefited, and David Pellauer for his comments on the notion of "peaceful conflict", which is very important to understand how the dialectic of conflict and conciliation can unfold in the domain of Ricœur's practical philosophy.

[2] Paul Ricœur, "Le bonheur hors-lieu," in *Où est le bonheur?*, ed. R.-P. Droit (Paris: Le Monde Editions, 1994), 336-337.

[3] Paul Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) is Ricœur's last published book, even though he continued to write afterwards, showing his attachment to life, in a kind of "spiritual exercise", (to use the Stoic category rehabilitated by Foucault and Pierre Hadot) through the act of writing. See Ricœur's *Living Up to Death*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[4] In a letter to Jean-Louis Schlegel, his editor at Seuil, Ricœur explains that he felt that he hadn't solved all the perplexities pertaining to his rearrangement of the semantic field of recognition. This was, Ricœur explained to Schlegel, the reason why he decided to accept François Azouvi's invitation to publish the book with Stock, instead of Seuil, his usual publisher. According to Ricœur: "vraiment, ce livre n'est pas pour le Seuil. C'est un électron libre et par trop chétif." See Paul Ricœur, lettre à Jean-Louis Schlegel, July 2003 (quoted in François Dosse, *Paul Ricœur: les sens d'une vie* (édition revue et augmentée) (Paris: La Découverte/Poche, 2008). Ricœur would therefore place *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004) as his definitive philosophical statement.

[5] See Paul Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. E. V. Kohák (Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 1966).

[6] See Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. E. Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

[7] "Si le 'symbole donne à penser' c'est aussi parce qu'il est, par définition, symbole de reconnaissance, comme le souligne Platon dans le Banquet: Chacun de nous est donc un symbole d'homme, coupé comme il l'a été à la manière d'une sole, le dédoublement d'une unité; et chacun cherche toujours son autre moitié, le symbole de lui-même." Jean Greisch, "Vers quelle reconnaissance," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* n.º 2 (Avril 2006): 151.

[8] Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

[9] "On peut dès lors considérer que la thèse sur laquelle s'achève cette relecture est aussi la cellule germinale du *Parcours de la reconnaissance*." Greisch, "Vers quelle reconnaissance," 153.

[10] I already mentioned, following Jean Greisch, how we can take *Freedom and Nature* and *The Symbolism of Evil* to be a decisive contribution to recognition, as well as the way in which the *Course* is almost announced in a passage of the ninth study of *Oneself as Another*. I will also mention that we can find in the sixth interview that Ricœur conducted with Gabriel Marcel in 1968: *Entretiens Paul Ricœur – Gabriel Marcel* (*Présence et Pensée*) (Paris: Aubier, 1968), 124.-125) a very instructive dialogue announcing some of the features of Ricœurian mutual recognition, namely: the possibility of recognition as gratitude, the connection of recognition with agape, and also the way in which we should link the notion of hope with the analysis of our everyday experiences. Finally, Ricœur's last important book before the *Course*, namely, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, contained very important passages on the Bergsonian connection between recognition and memory and also a first analysis of the polysemy of this complicated concept. See *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 556.

[11] See Paul Ricœur, "Non-violent Man and his Presence to History," in *History and Truth*, trans. C. A. Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965).

[12] See Paul Ricœur, *Amour et Justice* (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

[13] In these matters, Ricœur is following Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic, 1983). See Ricœur's reading of Walzer, Boltanski and Thévenot in "The Plurality of Instances of Justice," in *The Just*, trans. D. Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[14] This is the famous topic of the conflict of norms, that we find depicted in the Eighth and Ninth studies of *Oneself as Another*. Ricœur thinks that the Kantian formulations of the categorical imperative fail to consider the occasions in which there might be a conflict of different norms and thus it is not simple to determine, in each occasion, which norm shall prevail. Only the situated judgment will be able to decide in these cases. Nonetheless, when what is at stake is the conflict between the respect for a formal law or the solicitude towards the concrete other before us, Ricœur tends to consider that this solicitude towards the other is prevalent.

[15] See Michaël Foessel, "Être reconnu, droit ou phantasme?," Esprit nº 346 (juillet 2008): 63.

[16] Ricœur explicitly connects capacities and recognition in *The Just*, 2.

[17] "Si mon livre pouvait avoir une utilité, ce serait de dire à chacun: 'Quand vous employez le mot 'reconnaissance', que voulez-vous dire?'" ("La reconnaissance, entre don et réciprocité," *Réforme* 3063 (2004): 7).

[18] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 3-4.

[19] He mentions, for instance, the difficulties of the English semantic field of the word recognition in what concerns the conceptualization of recognition in p. 5 of the unpublished conference: "Comment j'ai

entrepris ce parcours de reconnaissance" "si quelqu'un reconnaît sa faute, c'est "acknowledge", mais par contre "reconnaître une autorité" c'est "recognize", "recognition". Nous sommes en présence du non recouvrement des lexiques, là où il y a recouvrement conceptuel."

[20] See, for example, the very good conceptual clarification of Heikki Ikäheimo and Arto Laitinen, "Analyzing Recognition. Identification, Acknowledgment and Recognitive Attitudes towards Persons" in *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and also Laitinen's analysis of Ricœur's book in this issue.

[21] For a detailed account of the many aspects of Ricœur's readings of Hegel, see the recent PhD thesis of Ching-Kai Shen, *L'esprit hégélien chez Paul Ricœur. Une interprétation anthropologique de la pensée hégélienne* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Université Catholique de Louvain, 2010).

[22] See "Hegel aujourd'hui," *Études Théologiques et Philosophiques* 49/3 (1974). This text has been recently republished in *Esprit* (Mars-Avril 2006).

[23] Ricœur, "Hegel aujourd'hui," 191.

[24] See the Interview that Olivier Abel conducted with Ricœur in 1991 "Paul Ricœur: Le tragique et la promesse" for the documentary *Présence Protestante*: "Donc, je sais où je me tiens. Je ne suis pas dans un vide supérieur précisément parce que, niant face à de nombreux problèmes qu'il y a un point de vue supérieur qui engloberait toutes les contradictions, je suis toujours quelque part. Ici je me tiens," 27. This text has been published in the DVD *Paul Ricœur: Philosophe de tous les dialogues* (Paris: Editions Montparnasse, 2008).

[25] See Paul Ricœur, "Un philosophe protestant: Pierre Thévenaz," in *Lectures III* (Paris: Seuil, 1994). This text was originally published in 1956.

[26] Ricœur, *Temps et Récit* vol. III, 371.

[27] Ricœur, *Temps et Récit* vol. III, 372.

[28] On the ambiguity of Ricœur's philosophical anthropology, always rethinking itself and refusing to resolve all its tensions in a definitive way, and also the way this constitutes a remedy against all dogmatisms, see Johann Michel's excellent account: *Paul Ricœur, une philosophie de l'agir humain* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 71.

[29] Paul Ricœur, "Freedom in the Light of Hope," in *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 412.

[30] Robert R. Williams "Ricœur on Recognition," *European Journal of Philosophy* 16:3 (2008): 467-473.

[31] See Robert R. Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997). I would mention this book alongside Honneth's *Struggle for Recognition* and Robert Pippin's *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) as some of the best works available in English to understand the nature of Hegelian recognition.

[32] Williams, "Ricœur on Recognition," 469.

[33] Williams, "Ricœur on Recognition," 469.

[34] Williams, "Ricœur on Recognition," 469.

[35] Williams, "Ricœur on Recognition," 472.

[36] Williams "Ricœur on Recognition," 472.

[37] Williams "Ricœur on Recognition," 472.

[38] Williams "Ricœur on Recognition," 473.

[39] See Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

[40] Marc-Antoine Vallée, "Quelle sorte d'être est le soi? Les implications ontologiques d'une herméneutique du soi," *Études Ricoeuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 1:1 (2010).

[41] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 171-186.

[42] Ricœur read the French translation of Honneth's book: *La lutte pour la reconnaissance: Grammaire morale des conflits sociaux*, trad. Pierre Rusch (Paris: Cerf, 2000). He is also using Taminiaux's French translation of the Hegelian *System der Sittlichkeit*: *Système de la vie éthique* (Paris: Payot, 1976). However, the substantive comments made by Taminiaux on the philosophy of the young Hegel are mostly on the book that Ricœur takes as a guide, precisely a translation of the so-called "Realphilosophie" of Jena: Jacques Taminiaux, *Naissance de la philosophie hégélienne de l'état,* commentaires et traduction de la *Realphilosophie de Iéna* (Paris: Payot, 1964).

[43] See the detailed informations given by Emmanuel Renault on this subject in the interview reproduced in this issue.

[44] See *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit: Eine Reaktualisierung der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001).

[45] In this section, I am mainly following *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991); *The Struggle for Recognition*; "Invisibility: On the Epistemology of Recognition" in the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume, 75, pp. 111–126; Honneth's exchange with Nancy Fraser: *Redistribution or Recognition? A political-philosophical exchange* (London/New York: Verso, 2003); *Reification: a New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) and the small article "Réification, connaissance, reconnaissance: quelques malentendus" in *Esprit* nº 346, juillet 2008, as well as two interviews: one with Michaël Foessel, published in the same volume of *Esprit*, "*La philosophie de la reconnaissance: une critique sociale*" and another with me: "Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (forthcoming). The volume of literature on Honneth in English is already very important. I will quote as my two main references the excellent study of Jean-Philippe Deranty: *Beyond Communication: A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy* (Leiden/

Boston: Brill, 2009) and the collective organized by Bert van der Brink and David Owen, *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (namely, Honneth's article on the ideology of recognition) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Jean-Philippe Deranty's and Emmanuel Renault's article "Politicizing Honneth's ethics of recognition," *Thesis Eleven* 88 (2007): 92-111 is also of the utmost importance for the way in which I am interpreting Honneth's account of recognition. And ultimately, we must consider this section as very provisional: Honneth's new book *Das Recht der Freiheit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2011), published a few days before the publication of this review, ultimately changes decisively the whole of Honneth's project.

[46] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 186.

[47] See Ricœur's "Is a purely procedural theory of justice possible?" in *The Just* and Honneth's "Das Gewebe der Gerechtigkeit" in *Das Ich im Wir* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2010). Honneth's *Das Recht der Freiheit* also seems to be a decisive development of this critique.

[48] See Axel Honneth, "Decentered Autonomy: The Subject After the Fall" in *The Fragmented World of the Social* (Albany: SUNY, 1995) and Ricœur's "Théonomie et/ou Autonomie," *Archivio di filosofia*, n°1-3, (1994).

[49] See Emmanuel Renault, *Souffrances Sociales* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008).

[50] The role of indignation as the denunciation of unjust experiences and the mobilization of social actors (therefore making them move from injustice to the quest for justice) is essential to both Honneth and Ricœur. On this process, see *The Struggle for Recognition*. On the recovery of moral sentiments and especially indignation, see Ricœur's *Reflections on the Just*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 48-49.

[51] See *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-philosophical Exchange*.

[52] I thank Catherine Goldenstein for having directed my attention to this text. (Conf. 176, boîte 52 of the Archives).

[53] Ricoeur, *The Course of Recognition*, 217-218.

[54] Besides Hénaff's *Le Prix de la Vérité*, consult the many precisions given by Hénaff in a long list of e-mail exchanges with Alain Caillé and Jacques T. Godbout, "*De la reconnaissance: Don, identité et estime de soi,*" *La Revue du MAUSS* 23 (Premier Semestre 2004): 242–288.

[55] "Quant au *potlatch*, même le plus agonistique, c'est une lutte de dons, c'est-à-dire un duel à travers des biens qui 'symbolisent' les protagonistes, ce n'est pas un combat par les armes. Le modèle hégélien suppose en somme que l'esprit du don cérémoniel a disparu. Ce modèle définit la relation conflictuelle des individus modernes. Quand la médiation de la chose donnée n'est plus là, la dialectique produit le Trois à partir du Deux. C'est une éthologie de la rencontre dans le cadre d'une anthropologie du don qui fait défaut dans certaines approches, ainsi A. Honneth, *La Lutte pour la reconnaissance,* Paris, Éd, du Cerf., 2000." (Hénaff, *Le Prix de la vérité*, 183).

[56] Paul Ricœur, "Considération sur la triade: 'le sacrifice, la dette, la grâce' selon Marcel Hénaff" in *Le Don et la Dette*, ed. M.M Olivetti (CEDAM, 2004), 37.

[57] Ricœur, "Considération sur la triade," 43.

[58] For an account of the several ways in which Ricœur influenced the projects of Boltanski and Thévenot, see "L'effet Ricœur dans les sciences humaines," *Esprit* (Mars-Avril 2006). For the very warm reception given by Thévenot to the *Course of Recognition*, see also the letter from Thévenot to Paul Ricœur of September 29th 2004 (quoted by François Dosse, *Paul Ricœur: les sens d'une vie*, 673).

[59] See Luc Boltanski, L'amour et la justice comme compétence: Trois essais de sociologie de l'action (Paris: Éditions Métailié, 1990).

[60] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 120.

[61] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme competences,* 121.

[62] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 177.

[63] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 154.

[64] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 200.

[65] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 197.

[66] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 185 ff.

[67] Boltanski, *L'amour et la justice comme compétences*, 236.

[68] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 225 ff.

[69] This is, for Ricœur, one of society's main problems: "il y a un lien étrange entre la production de richesse et la production d'inégalités – mais nous vivons de cela, n'est-ce pas, cruellement**.**" See "La lutte pour la reconnaissance et l'économie du don" in *Hermenéutica y Responsabilidad: Homenaje a Paul Ricœur*, ed. M. A. Villaverde (Santiago de Compostella: Campus Universitario, 2005), 23.

[70] Ricœur, The Course of Recognition, 233.

[71] Ricœur, The Course of Recognition, 237.

[72] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 241.

[73] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 231.

[74] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 261.

[75] See Laurent Thévenot, "Reconnaissances: avec Paul Ricœur et Axel Honneth" in *La quête de reconnaissance: nouveau phénomène social total*, org. Alain Caillé (Paris: La Découverte, 2007), 269-283.

[76] Thévenot, "Reconnaissances: avec Paul Ricœur et Axel Honneth," 271.

[77] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 263.

[78] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 263.

[79] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 242.

[80] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 243.

[81] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 244.

[82] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 246.

[83] Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 236.

[84] See his interview with Foessel, "La philosophie de la reconnaissance: une critique sociale," 94.

[85] See Honneth's *Reification*.

[86] See Appiah's comment on Taylor in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[87] See Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[88] Ricœur, The Course of Recognition, 245.

[89] See Alain Loute, "La logique excessive du geste courageux: une force de création sociale? Réflexions à partir de Paul Ricœur," *Dissenssus: Revue de philosophie politique de l'ULG* 2 (Septembre 2009).

[90] Loute, "La logique excessive du geste courageux," 74.

[91] Loute, "La logique excessive du geste courageux," 75.

[92] See my "From Conflict to Conciliation and Back Again: Some Notes on Ricœur's Dialectic," *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra* vol. 19, n.º 38 (2010): 341-366. This article will be available on-line at http://www.uc.pt/fluc/dfci/publicacoes/ On the topic of conflict, see also Maria Luísa Portocarrero, *A Hermenêutica do Conflito em Paul Ricœur* (Coimbra: Minerva, 1992).

[93] See "Que les hommes capables se reconnaissent!," *Rue Descartes* Hors-série "L'homme capable: autour de Paul Ricœur" (2006): 164.