

Ethics of Recognition and the Second-Person Standpoint

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RESUMEN

En este artículo, discuto la perspectiva de segunda persona en relación la ética y su conexión con la teoría del reconocimiento. Sostengo que el reconocimiento podría interpretarse como esencialmente de segunda persona, pues implica mutualidad y reciprocidad como componentes esenciales que requieren la existencia de una segunda persona con quien pueda darse la relación de reconocimiento. Por tanto, la perspectiva de segunda persona y el reconocimiento contribuyen a la comprensión de la socialidad fundamental de la vida. Sin embargo, como se mostrará, la perspectiva de segunda persona podría no garantizar la total integración de una persona, pues opta por una concepción más limitada del reconocimiento y excluye partes esenciales de la socialización humana, tales como el amor y la estima. Alternativamente, propongo su análisis desde una concepción del reconocimiento que sea capaz tanto de proveer autoridad de segunda persona como de cumplir con otras necesidades humanas. El artículo también ofrece una reflexión sobre la vulnerabilidad social desde la perspectiva de estas dos aproximaciones interrelacionadas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *perspectiva de segunda persona, reconocimiento, respeto, persona, vulnerabilidad intersubjetiva.*

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I discuss the second-personal approach to ethics and its connection to the theory of recognition. I claim that recognition could be interpreted as essentially second-personal so far as it involves mutuality and reciprocity as essential components that require the existence of the second person with whom the relationship of recognition can take place. Hence, both the second-person approach and recognition serve to better understand the fundamental sociality of human life. However, as it will be demonstrated the second-personal approach could not guarantee the full integration of a person, because it opts for a narrower conception of recognition, and excludes essential parts of human socialization such as love and esteem. Alternatively, I endorse the plural conception of recognition that is capable of both providing second-personal authority and fulfilling other interpersonal human needs. The article also provides a reflection on social vulnerability from the perspective of these two interrelated approaches.

KEYWORDS: *Second-Personal Approach, Recognition, Respect, Person, Intersubjective Vulnerability.*

*As a face opposite water reflects another face
so do people reflect each other's hearts.*

Proverbs 27:19

INTRODUCTION

All forms of human social interactions are based on some general norms and rules which are mutually respected and expected to be considered. We have expectations that so far as we are part of a community there should be some guiding principles that will be met upon rational judgments and accountability of other persons. Social interactions that consider second-person perspectives are basic and complex at the same time. Basic in the sense that they cover almost all aspects of our lives. Our life forms are intersubjective; we encounter others in our daily routines. At the same time, second-person interactions entail different cultural norms and knowledge that are always integrated into human interactions [Pérez and Gomila (2022), p. 3]. We respect some norms, and we expect others to do the same. Hence, it is very difficult to imagine a society and process of socialization without proper, mutual recognition [Stahl (2021), Siep (2021)]. In one context, recognition could be understood as consideration and accountability as well as respect [Scanlon (1998), Darwall (2006)]. In another, it could cover categories such as love and merit that are also relevant ontologically [Honneth (1996), (2007), Taylor (1985), (1994)]. In both cases recognition entails normative elements in itself [Siep (2021), p. 56]. The different forms and modes of recognition give us reason to claim that recognition consists of a constitutive element of making human beings persons [Ikäheimo (2010), (2021), Laitinen (2007), Quante (2018)]. Relationships of recognition are often perceived to be the cornerstone for strengthening individuals, groups, and institutions [Habermas (1990), (1993), (2003), Ikäheimo (2022)]. What we mutually grant each other in our second-personal interactions is our competence and authority, rationality and freedom, and a personal stance that must be mutually respected.

In this paper, I claim that recognition is an authentically second-personal concept as far as there is no recognition without the second person. To quote Annette Baier “persons essentially are second persons” [Baier (1985), p. 84]. Recognition is crucial for constituting full-fledged personhood and for the acknowledgment of different moral entities. Thus, the second-person perspective is already included in proper forms

of recognitive relationships that define the agency of another person. In order for one to be recognized as an autonomous person, s(he) should recognize the other as such and vice versa, otherwise, this recognition would have only formal status and would function neither as a constitutive nor as a qualitative tool for intersubjective relationships between persons. I claim that recognition and second-person perspective are two interrelated accounts of the fundamental sociality of the human form of life. According to this view, human sociality exists inasmuch as human beings address and relate to each other as second persons [Khurana (2021), pp. 1-2, Honneth (2021a), p. 3].

The interpersonal interactions that operate through different forms of recognition are essentially second-person interactions. Second-person interactions differ from other forms of social interactions (that are more detached or observational) insofar as they involve a participatory stance which is a crucial precondition for constructing and developing the mental capacities of an individual [Pérez and Gomila (2022), p. 2]. This participatory stance is distinctive in the way in which human beings do not just observe or handle each other, but recognize one another in thought, speech, and action [Khurana (2021), p. 1]. Recognition relationships always involve at least two participants, and one is always required to consider the other's perspective/standpoint in order for recognition to be realized at all. The relation of the second person and the relation of recognition are both social and contain reciprocity within themselves.¹ If the element of reciprocity is absent, then recognition could not grant any of its participants a status of being recognized (*Anerkanntsein*), and thus they could experience both mental and social harm from this process (I will develop this idea more profoundly below under the notion of vulnerability). Despite the similarities these two approaches have, I will suggest that the theory of the second-person approach as it is outlined by Stephen Darwall opts for a narrower conception of recognition and excludes essential parts of human socialization and constitution such as love and esteem. In order for the second-person perspective to have its relevance and actuality, first of all, persons should be constituted, and this is possible through plural forms of recognitive relationships.

Thus, in the first section, I will discuss the main points of the second-person approach according to Darwall. I will underline the importance of the category of respect in his theory and show that this model of second-person approach excludes crucial layers of interpersonal relationships focusing exclusively on mutual moral accountability, whereas the notion of recognition entails other spheres that include rela-

tions of love, respect, and esteem. In the second section, I will show how exactly this plural understanding of the concept of recognition could be enriching for the second-person perspective and why it is a crucial precondition for constituting persons in a full-fledged sense. The paper ends up with a reflection on the ways in which these approaches help us understand the social vulnerability of (inter)personal experiences and human life.

I. CONTEXTUALIZING THE SECOND-PERSON APPROACH IN ETHICS

One of the main claims of the second person-related forms of recognition is that a respectful attitude toward the autonomy of other persons should be emptied from emotional attachments. Respect should be the basis of any interaction [Siep (2006), p. 243]. So, the question that arises here is whether this form of rational recognition of different social and institutional practices should be judged as an independent form of recognition theory or should it be approached as something fulfilling a more complex form of human interaction with practical and ethical attitudes of universal respect. Some could argue that respect should entail emotional care for another person and that attitude of respect should be rational as well as emotional. In the case of a relationship between a physician and a patient, it is not possible to acknowledge the latter without the physician's benevolence, care, consideration, and helpfulness. It also includes consideration of the patient's wishes about his or her life. On the other hand, emotional attachments are found to be hindering while attempting to objectively evaluate and appreciate a second-person perspective and its objective authority. The theory of moral and legal recognition states that the general attitude of respect toward others' autonomy must be independent of emotional attachments, desires, and wishes [Siep (2010), p. 115]. According to this view love, care, and emotions, (but not esteem or honor respect as Darwall calls it²) may lead to patronizing relationships giving often 'irrational' wishes and desires too much value. In this perspective, objective values and institutions are the main mediums in constituting healthy relationships where the individual autonomy of the second person will be positively evaluated and respected.

Contrary to this, I claim that it is possible to elaborate on the normative content of morality on the basis of mutual recognition understood in its complexity with all integrated forms or spheres, such as emotions, affections, merits, etc. The moral point of view should refer to different features and conditions that are desirable and legitimately ex-

pected out of intersubjective relations [Honneth (2007)] or that could not be reasonably rejected by similarly motivated agents [Scanlon (1998), (2014)] or that should be called moral if it can be justified and agreed by all the agents concerned [Habermas (1990)]. These kinds of claims, I argue, could be an outcome of the moral implications of second-personal recognition that could be translated into normative principles of a theory of society.

In light of current debates, it makes sense to consider some connections between recognition theory³ on the one hand and the so-called ethical contractualist conception represented by two major figures namely T. M. Scanlon and S. Darwall.⁴ Obviously, these two traditions have some similarities. Both center on our interpersonal relations and how we approach our moral status and obligations. These theories are concerned with mutual recognition and thereby the perspective or standing of others. Scanlon's main idea is that the morality that he wants to establish is essentially concerned with what we are able to justify to other people. In other words, in order for some action to be judged as morally right, it should be justifiable to others, given the fact that they are rationally motivated subjects and could not reasonably reject the rightness of the action in focus [Scanlon (1998), p. 5, Wallace (2002), p. 430]. On the other hand, Darwall is concerned with second-personal authority. He claims that our moral claims and conceptions entail the second-personal perspective, that is they entail the interaction between two mutually recognized subjects that acknowledge each other's claims as having second-personal authority. Darwall describes the second-personal standpoint as "the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another's conduct and will" [Darwall (2006), p. 3, also cited in Wallace (2007), p. 24]. Despite these strong correlations between the two traditions, until now there was not an explicit attempt to put them in dialogue.⁵ My account on the subject could be shortly expressed as the following: Both Scanlon's conception of mutual recognition and Darwall's second-person standpoint opt for a narrower conception of recognition focusing on mutual moral accountability and interpersonal justification of moral claims while leaving aside the complex and multi-dimensional background of the theory of recognition that incorporates relations of love, respect, and esteem.

This tradition – let's call it ethical contractualism -- obviously lacks certain features that I find to be crucial for full personal integration. They reduce recognition to respect in the realm of law, thus technically ignoring the whole idea of the importance of emotions and merit for

self-consciousness. They claim that respect for the autonomy of the other person should be emptied from emotional attachments [Siep (2010), p. 256]. Otherwise, it seriously risks becoming a patronizing approach that does not acknowledge the autonomy of the other individual. I want to challenge this perspective. I don't say that the arguments of Scanlon and Darwall are not compatible with the theory of recognition, but I argue that the "abstract" rights sphere is just one of the forms of recognitive relationships and it should be enriched with other complex forms of human interaction that are crucial for successful personal integration.

II. WHAT ARE THE MAIN SHORTCOMINGS OF DARWALL'S MODEL OF SECOND-PERSON STANDPOINT?

In opposition to Darwall, I argue that his model lacks a certain emphasis on the significance of the emotional and distinctive nature of human beings that is necessary to acknowledge in order for persons to fully integrate [Taylor (1994), Laitinen (2006), Honneth (2007), Habermas (1993), Quante (2019)]. Even though in Darwall there are numerous references towards the importance of desire (mostly because of Kantian influence⁶), need on the one hand and esteem and honor on the other, his main focus nevertheless is the notion of respect in the realm of law. Morality as equal accountability is reduced on moral relations in terms of respect, Darwall says [(2006) pp. 119-120, (2021) p. 5]. His main argument regarding the notion of respect is that the recognition of authority is an "irreducibly second-personal form of respect" [Darwall (2006) p. 119]. In other words, respect is a precondition for second-personal authority, or even better it is the best expression of acknowledging someone's authority as a rational and moral agent. We can call it an expressive attitude that confirms the dignity of another person as an autonomous being. "He (Darwall) believes (...) that only the respect for the autonomy of persons grounded in the "second-personal attitude" is ultimately able to justify normative prescriptions because only in this case we can speak of a "human right" [Honneth (2021a), p. 5].

However, my point is that by reducing moral categories of ethical relationships on this mutuality and acknowledgment as a form of respect, Darwall misses very important layers of social communication that are crucial for the constitution of fully-fledged human persons. Persons that would better appraise someone's honor and that would better care for the emotional integration of another if those categories were given suffi-

cient moral and ethical value.⁷ Darwall basically demonstrates why it is important to respect another person's dignity in order for her to be accountable and why in general our dignity is worth respecting. Dignity, as he argues, is the main object of respect and it is always reciprocal as the roots of this word suggest. Respect or '*respicere*' connotes the process of 'looking back', of a certain form of mutual expectation of giving and receiving. And it always takes place among mutually accountable equals who are members of a community [Darwall (2006), p. 121].

Yet Darwall argues that in contrast to respect, the category of esteem (honor respect) is not ethically fundamental. He claims that we could lack esteem recognition, and no harm will be caused whatsoever. "Someone who fails to esteem your estimable qualities may not give you the response you deserve, but esteem is nothing you or anyone else can expect or demand" [Darwall (2006), p. 120]. Esteem is basically a category that not only refers to the certain higher status that one tries to achieve, but it contains a very plural momentum of distinctive features each of us potentially possesses. It is the authenticity of self, the uniqueness caused by culture or any other particular background. For instance, in Taylor, esteem recognition is into the framework of politics of difference that contains all cultural distinctiveness and particularities relevant for making up identities [Taylor (1994)]. Politics of difference requires recognition of a unique identity of an individual. Respectively what in Darwall is called respect for our dignity and autonomy, which is central to his second-person theory, in Taylor is entitled as politics of universalism — a requirement of the equal dignity of all [Taylor (1994), p. 38]. Thus, by giving universal respect *qua person* an absolute category and basically reducing second-personal standing only on this relationship -- excluding love and esteem — Darwall fails to give particularities enough value in his ethical theory of the second person. In addition, he risks completely ignoring distinctness and assimilating it into a dominant culture or majority identity [Honneth (2021a) p. 3]. We might belong to the same moral community and still differ from each other with our distinctive properties and merits that also need to be considered [Honneth (2021b), p. 9]. Darwall's definition of esteem recognition is also reduced to acknowledging someone in a specific capacity (as a tennis player, for instance). But my argument against Darwall is that the category of esteem goes far beyond specific capacities a member of a community could have and that it is connected to the formation and development of personal identity.

Individual identity formation takes place through stages of internalization of recognition relationships. The individual should learn how to relate to himself or herself through the various stages of interactions with others. He or she should be able to see herself both as a particular and a full member of a society “by being gradually assured of specific abilities and needs constituting his or her personality through the approving patterns of reaction by generalized interaction partners” [Honneth (2004), p. 354]. Elimination of forms of injustices, exclusion, inequality, humiliation, etc., is possible through the full personal integration for which we need to adopt a plural conception of justice with three recognition principles — love, equality, and merit. As Honneth claims “our notion of justice is...linked to how, and as what, subjects recognize each other” [Honneth (2005), p. 44]. I do not say that respect as a general category of universal forms of social interaction is somehow irrelevant to the theory of justice. On the contrary, it is very much needed. Genuine attitudes of respect and reciprocity are since Kant central to moral philosophy. One must be respectful towards the autonomy of another individual as a rational being. This is obviously no small achievement. In a society where all members treat one another with respect as equal, where reciprocal respect is a universal law, presumably, these members will barely be subject to humiliation or insult in their lifetime [Honneth (2021a), p. 4]. However, it is also legitimate to say that given the complexity of contemporary societies and their social dynamics, “a theory of justice demands something more and different from the normative prescription of an attitude of universal respect” [Honneth (2021a), p. 5]. And this “more” is, as already mentioned, other essential forms of cognitive relations. Hence, I will now focus on Darwall’s distinction between notions of appraisal (honor respect) and recognition respect to make my argument more explicit and graspable.

III. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RECOGNITION RESPECT AND APPRAISAL AND WHY IT IS RELEVANT FOR THE SECOND-PERSON PERSPECTIVE?

For Darwall recognition is equal to respect. Furthermore, recognition is nothing more than respect. When we talk about recognizing someone it means that we respect someone. So, these two notions are almost always used interchangeably. However, there are different kinds of respect in the social sphere. These forms of respect have different rea-

sons based on which they are attributed to someone. One could be respected because of her dignity as a person (in the realm of law). One could be respected because she has huge value to certain person/s (loving relationships). Or one could be respected in some specific capacity, as a doctor or a tennis player (certain merit for certain value, the category of esteem). There are certainly numerous forms of respect in different layers of interpersonal relationships, but following Darwall, I will focus only on *Two Kinds of Respect*. That is recognition respect (i) and appraisal. i.e., honor respect (ii).

The object of recognition respect is not merit or any form of excellence, but the dignity and authority of the person. Darwall calls recognition respect of someone as a person “an acknowledgment of someone’s standing to address and be addressed second-personal reasons rooted in the dignity of persons” [Darwall (2006), p. 126]. It is not about appraising someone as a distinguished personality, valued within society because of her specific capacities and skills, but it is about respecting someone who is entitled to be respected because s(he) has standing in society and that standing is crucial in our relationships to that particular person. Therefore, these relationships should be second-personal. What should be respected is the dignity and authority of the person, who has the authority of claims. The so-called second-personal claims are the basis for morality, according to Darwall. Because the legitimation of these claims is based on the principle of equal accountability meaning that you and I have the same right, same kind of authority, to protest whenever people cause us pain, for instance by stepping on our toes. Darwall’s point is that whenever individuals achieve some ‘common authority’ it is always through mutual respect, and it should not be translated as a joint authority to legislate norms from our shared point of view but to have equal and reciprocal standing for making valid claims to each other [Wallace (2007), p. 33]. Besides, the morality of equal accountability suggests that “to be a person is to have the competence and standing to address demands as persons to other persons, and to be addressed by them, within a community of mutually accountable equals”. Thus, “this second personal competence gives all persons an equal dignity, irrespectively of their merit. We, therefore, respect another as a person when we accord him this standing in our relations to him” [Darwall (2006), p. 126].

However, there is another kind of recognition that manifests in different attitudes toward other persons and the source of its object should also be searched elsewhere. It is also referred to by the term ‘respect’ but unlike recognition respect, its objects are persons who are valued by so-

ciety because of their excellence as persons engaged in their particular fields [Darwall (1977), p. 38]. For instance, let's take a football player who sacrifices all of his time and resources to become a professional. Besides he is a decent human being, he always deals with his opponents kindly and respectfully. This is for Darwall a valid reason for this person to be particularly respected in society. He deserves a positive appraisal because he has developed appropriate characteristics which are crucial in his field. To be highly respected as a football player one must demonstrate excellence in playing football, which is different from personal excellence. However, it is intuitive to say that this football player will not be positively appraised if he has no moral behavior, for instance, if he is noticed in sexual harassment or bank robbery. So, this form of recognition is called appraisal respect "that is merited or earned by conduct or character" [Darwall (2006), p. 125]. "It is like esteem or a high regard for someone" [Darwall (1977), p. 39]. Thus, the focus of appraisal respect is specific character-related features of a person, but it also does not stay blind towards person-making features in the moral realm. Moreover, the appraisal respect should always be categorical and not hypothetical. It must be an unconditional positive evaluation of a person. A person should not be positively appraised because person X knows that person Y has good skills in robbery and person X is intending to rob a bank. To use Kantian terminology, the object of appraisal respect should be always perceived as an end in itself and not as mere means. Despite some potential ethical consequences, appraisal respect is not a category that is relevant from the perspective of morality. For Darwall appraisal recognition is a sphere that needs to be grounded on recognition respect, which is central to moral perspective. One can claim that respect recognition is a precondition for appraisal respect. He emphasizes that "... the only beings who are appropriate objects of appraisal respect are those who are themselves capable of recognition respect" [Darwall (1977), p. 47]. Appraisal recognition is neither ethically fundamental nor owned or expected. As Darwall claims "esteem is nothing you or anyone else can expect or demand" [Darwall (2006), p. 120].⁸

Darwall clearly expresses his position about the centrality of the universal respect category (recognition respect) for his theory of second-person standpoint. He argues that a subject within the realm of law is his main focus and that his theory is not very much concerned with "the relation of recognition in Hegel's first and third forms" [Darwall (2021b), p. 4]. Summarizing the universal respect category as a form of mutual recognition crucial for the second-personal authority, Darwall attempts

to link it with the Hegelian tradition. To him, the second form of recognition (at least in early Hegel) is involved in civil society and mutual exchange under the law - law as the relation of persons, and their conduct to each other. "The creation of law, in general" is "the recognizing relation" "between persons, conceived as agents subject to law" [Honneth (1996), p. 42, quoted in Darwall (2021b), p. 4]. Thus, he continues "when you and I relate to one another as legal subjects, we implicitly respect our shared common legal status and one another as having it" [Darwall (2021b), p. 4]. The second-person standpoint contains a respectful attitude as it defines reasonable conduct as morally accountable, it grounds the second-personal authority on the premise of attributing moral demands to reasonable agents, having a right of claims in the realm of mutually interdependent actions. "When we hold ourselves accountable to one another and see each other as having a shared basic authority to make claims and demands, we are committed not just to looking upon one another, but to each other, as equals" [Darwall (2021b), p. 4].

The crucial insight that needs to be considered is that the second person approach is not just any kind of relationship you and I could lead but only the one that addresses second personal reasons and claims (for which recognition respect is fundamental). This is a relation of mutual accountability to put in different terms. According to Darwall (1977), what I owe to you is "recognition respect" which means acknowledging the second-personal competence and authority you have vis-à-vis others. Darwall's *respect recognition* does not include caring for our human needs, considering our wishes and desires, social esteem for our virtues, particular achievements, or contributions, it does not include recognition of our particularity and singularity, our cultural, ethnic, sexual, or any other fundamental background for our identities. It is recognition so far as we are human beings, bearers of certain human rights in the universal moral category.⁹ In contrast, as Robert Stern puts it, complete human individuals have far more developed needs and expectations than it is elaborated by Darwall. There are other dimensions or layers that are found to be crucial for the lifeworld of persons. Stern argues that "what the subject seeks ... through recognition" ultimately is, "to be seen for who they are, as complete individuals — where this is wider than their second-personal competence and authority (Darwall's recognition respect) or their status and standing (his appraisal respect)" [Stern (2021), p. 11]. Thereby, recognition is not only an acknowledgment of universal equality, but it simultaneously includes recognition of difference and individuality, to which everyone should be equally entitled [Khurana (2021), p. 4].

Achievement, esteem, and social contribution are key factors for establishing the adequate status of full-fledged citizenship and for socializing a person properly. Thus, they should not be emptied of normative significance [Honneth (2021a), p. 5]. Nevertheless, according to Honneth that is exactly what Darwall apparently does – removes all normative significance to the categories of love and esteem – by underlying respect for the autonomy of persons as the ultimate goal for justifying normative prescriptions and by neglecting other important interpersonal layers.

IV. SOCIAL VULNERABILITY AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OF HUMAN INTERACTION

Following what has already been said, I argue that in order to socially secure the conditions of individual self-realization, subjects should be able to experience intersubjective recognition not only in regard to their personal autonomy, in the realm of law, but also in respect of their specific, very subjective needs and particular capabilities. A person should be respectively treated in all those dimensions in order to develop a healthy relationship towards herself and her identity. Lack of care, lack of respect, and lack of esteem could all have a very negative impact on a person's well-being both mentally and physically. On the one hand, without emotional support from the family or other “primary groups”, individuals cannot achieve full psychological stability and a feeling of self-worth (*Selbstwertgefühl*). Emotional ties are crucial for constituting a fully-fledged individual.

On the other hand, esteem recognition is necessary to define what social role or status an individual has within society. This will result in a person's self-appreciation and self-worth not just as a human being but as someone with particular value for society. A person's social valuation occurs within the horizon of specific norms of a society, which accords different weights to particular modes of self-realization [Pereira (2013), p. 21]. Esteem recognition like love and respect is very deeply connected to proper identity formation. It acknowledges someone's particular authentic being, as a subject of distinctive experiences, desires, and life choices. These unique features are strongly connected to personal self-awareness and positive self-relation. In fact, esteem recognition makes its point exactly on this feature, in contrast to the universal respect category. It values an individual because of his or her unique role in a particular milieu and the corresponding worth to society.

Darwall fails to acknowledge the plural forms of deep interpersonal roots that exist in social communication. For him, the morality of recognition respect depends on self-evident ethical claims that are taken for granted, having been institutionalized and regulated by the law [Honneth (2021b), p. 9]. Second-personal relationship requires an existing deontic realm wherein concepts like authority, accountability, claim, right, obligation, and so forth are already introduced and successfully employed in practice [Darwall (2021a) p. 2] and wherein persons are recognized as equal in their unique identities. But whenever this order is shaken and proper recognition — absent or withdrawn, norms that regulate the I-you relation could be questioned by participants and asked to be changed. If participants question the accepted normative framework “then a communicative process has to come into play that will end up introducing revisions into the existing moral system” [Honneth (2021b), p. 10].

Thus, the universal respect category, despite being crucial, is not a sufficient factor for full personal integrity in the community. Esteem recognition is necessary as well as love.¹⁰ The absence of any of those personality constituent aspects could have a very negative outcome and could cause “moral injuries”. Consequently, the second-person perspective should also entail these different forms of interpersonal layers in order for it to be able to truly take into consideration the autonomy and epistemic competencies of another person. Whenever this is not the case, feelings of inequality and nonfulfillment will start to raise within the subject. The absence of recognition and disregard in any of the relevant spheres of human life causes harm to the well-being of an individual and thus is tied to the category of vulnerability.

The moral category of social injustice is played out in negative experiences initially [Margalit, (1998), (2001), Honneth (1995), (1997), (2004), (2007); Deranty (2010), Habermas (1990)]. The circumstances that are experienced as “unjust” or “unfair” give us a proper medium to discover the internal connection between morality and recognition. The aspect that is typical for this type of condition is the absence of proper recognition, whenever it is denied or withdrawn. The feeling of moral injustices could be a result of it and not obligatory in abstract categories. Whenever A’s action disregards or disrespects B, B can experience certain “moral injury”. If this action could cause physical harm, it could be evaluated as an explicit intention of disregard to B that will cause mental harm to the subject’s self-consciousness and well-being. The crucial here is the accompanying consciousness of not being properly recognized in B’s own self-understanding. Stealing could be another example of moral

injustice because it is a symbolic offense of the subject's mental condition and self-relation. It's a humiliation of her positive self-image [Honneth (1997), p. 23, Deranty (2010), p. 358].

Thereby, human beings are moral agents and thus vulnerable to certain forms of disregard so far as they form their identity from the beginning dependent upon the help and affirmation of other human beings [Habermas (1990), pp. 43-57]. If we want to establish a positive concept of morality from these premises, then recognition could be assigned to protection from potential dangers onto moral agents. The moral point of view, or objective point of view, then could be translated into enabling the network of actions and attitudes that need to be adopted in order to protect human beings from mental injuries that are caused by the absence of proper communicative tools responsible for strengthening and assisting positive self-relation. In brief, the moral implication of second-personal recognition could sound something like this: Morality is at the core of practices and approaches that we are adopting mutually to protect and support those conditions that are necessary for personal integrity and well-being [Honneth (2001), p. 28, Deranty (2010), p. 357].

The absence or denial of recognition could have tremendous effects on a person's sense of well-being, as it destroys the confidence one needs to have in herself in order to enjoy self-relation and keep mental well-being. The absence of recognition that could exist in innumerable forms is directly connected to the significance of a person's role and status in her community. Human beings are morally vulnerable because the constitution of their identities is not an independent process, and it involves other human beings who are able to affirm their being [Habermas (1990), pp. 43-57, (1993), p. 106]. Person is intersubjectively constituted through relations of recognition [Quante (2018), Ikäheimo (2009), (2014), (2017), (2020), (2022), Taylor (1985), (1994), Honneth (1995), (2007)]. The social integrity of a person is then dependent on mutual obligations (broadly understood, including concrete duties) and responsibilities that we have to take towards each other. Here we see explicitly how important a well-constructed second-person standpoint (including second-personal competence and authority) could be for moral agency.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on insights from the Hegelian tradition of recognition theories and Darwall's approaches to the second person standpoint we

can see that the fundamental experience of human interaction could be translated into the category of vulnerability. The normative feature of the theory of second-personal recognition thus should be to avoid experiences of disrespect, humiliation, and misrecognition in any form whatsoever. This is a necessary precondition to avoid pathological outcomes that are often an issue in contemporary societies (whenever there is an absence of recognition of the proper identity of the individual or group). Our very existence is often concerned with a mere glance by the other. It is even harder when a subject witnesses a withdrawal of recognition of his or her humanity, emotions, merits, etc. Therefore, one of the urgent tasks of second-personal recognition must be to find resources and mediums to prevent or dissolve such forms of denial in every layer of interpersonal recognition.

Whenever we are talking about the full integration of a person into society and the relevance of the second-person standpoint, factors like emotional regard, positive recognitive attitude, care, and enrichment through cultural diversity should be considered. Human interaction should incorporate all three modes of recognition in order for it to be fulfilled. The three forms of recognition that I have outlined are central constituents of the lifeworld of persons and being a person among other persons in a full-fledged sense of the word depends on being an object of these diverse relationships. The relation of the second person and the relation of recognition have more in common than one could imagine. They both imply reciprocity and mutuality as their ideal modes of application. When I address you second-personally, I admit a basic second-personal authority and competence to you. Moreover, I also need to presume that you acknowledge the authority that I claim for myself. In terms of the theory of recognition, If I seek recognition from someone this presupposes that I recognize this person as capable of recognizing me. Neither of the members who participate in the relationship of recognition could be recognized fully unless they mutually recognize each other.

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NOTES

¹ However, this does not mean that all social relations are essentially reciprocal, but that reciprocity is the type of relationship that is irreducibly social. Dissymmetrical social relationships are problematic for both theory of recognition and the theory of the second person. See Mauss, M. (2016), *The Gift*, Chicago, HAU Books.

² See Darwall, S. (1997), “Two Kinds of Respect”; in *Ethics*, Vol. 88, No 1, pp. 36-49.

³ Here I mean mostly authors of Hegelian tradition, like Habermas, Honneth, and Taylor, but also authors who mostly work in the social ontology of recognition like Pippin, Pinkard, and Brandom. However, in this article, I will not refer to this so-called social ontology school of Hegelian tradition.

⁴ Throughout this article I will focus exclusively on Darwall. However, there are considerable insights into the work of T.M. Scanlon concerning the domain of interpersonal morality. A large part of Scanlon’s views is compatible with the theory of mutual recognition. See Wallace J., Kumar, R., and Freeman, S. (2011), *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T.M. Scanlon*; Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁵ Besides some short articles on the question that were published very recently in the special issue: *Recognition and the Second Person*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, 19 September 2021. I will refer to most of the articles from this issue.

⁶ In Darwall desire is a very ambiguous concept. Therefore, for scholars, it is difficult to distinguish between desire coming from feelings and desire in the realm of practical reasoning. On this topic see Shapiro, T. (2010), “Desires as Demands: How the Second-Person Standpoint Might Be Internal to Reflective Agency”; in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXXXI, no. 1, pp. 229-236.

⁷ These aspects are also crucial for moral agency. See Deigh, J. (1996), *The Sources of Moral Agency*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

⁸ This point is also critically revised in Khurana (2021) and Wallace (2007); see references below.

⁹ Here, one should not mix up appraisal respect and respect recognition. Here it is about the latter.

¹⁰ It is worth mentioning that in his early conceptions of the formation of spirit, Hegel underlines the importance of love. It is specifically the love between man and woman in the form of everyday concrete relationships, that exemplary signifies what it means to recognize one another as “free beings”. Cf. Honneth A. (2021b), “‘You’ or ‘We’: The Limits of the Second Person Perspective”, *European Journal of Philosophy* 29(3), p. 587. On the systematic role of love in Hegel’s early philosophy see Henrich, D. (1972), *Hegel and Hölderlin, Idealistic Studies* 2, pp. 151-173.

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