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School of Social Work
University of Windsor
401 Sunset Avenue
Windsor, Ont.
Canada N9B 3P4
Email: cswedit@uwindsor.ca

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(Re)cognition: A Move to Explicate Race in Axel Honneth's Critical Theory of Social Justice

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Shana Almeida¹

¹York University

Abstract

In this paper I draw from critical work on the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural functions of race, to trace how Axel Honneth's recognition as a critical social theory of justice is activated through racial thinking. In my analyses, I outline the need to theorize recognition as a "racial recognition"; complicating current theories, which seem to continuously inscribe the bourgeois white male as the true provider of justice and the bearer of rights; the true subject. Critical questions for social work are raised. How might race/racial thinking underlie our visions of social justice, and who benefits from this? What happens when we re-view the social and political justice intentions of social work through the lens of global white supremacy, say, as we move towards international development work in the global south? This paper presents important theoretical positions on race and the "morality" of recognition as social justice, which contribute highly to critical, socio-political, anti-racist social work theory and practice.

Keywords: race, recognition, social justice, critical theory

On March 24 2010, the province of Quebec's National Assembly tabled Bill 94, the proposed legislation to ban Muslim women from receiving crucial services, such as education and healthcare, if a veil covers their faces. In the subsequent media frenzy, Premier Jean Charest advised that the decision to unveil Muslim women was made to strike a balance between respecting the rights of individuals (maintaining "equality between men and women and the religious neutrality of the state" - Ljunggren, 2010, para. 6) while keeping the province open and welcoming to newcomers. In this paper I will argue that the racial underpinnings, masked as they were, in the production of such a law in Quebec also underlie Axel Honneth's "moral-theoretical monism", a move to explicate the pre-political suffering of subjects in order to move towards recognition and the moral progress of a society (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 157). C. W. Mills (1998) asks what would happen if we put race at the center of modern political philosophy and contemporary liberal theory, rather than as an add-on item. Employing critical work on the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural functions of race, I will trace how Axel Honneth's critical social theory of justice is activated through race. In "Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange" (2003), Honneth argues contra Nancy Fraser that a step needs to occur before we move to defining recognition as claims made by social movements in public spaces; that we need to consider the intersubjective struggles that impede recognition claims in the first place (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). I offer that yet another step needs to happen before Honneth defines the needs of the subject who struggles for recognition, that is, to centralize how race (re)produces his autonomous, individualized, moral subject as white, ultimately, through the process of recognition.

A Critical (Anti)Race Approach to Moral-theoretical Monism

In their book "Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange" (2003), critical theorists Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth debate the question of redistribution (of economic resources, access to economic goods) or recognition (value and respect for cultural identities and difference) as principles of social justice. While Nancy Fraser offers a two-dimensional paradigm of social justice that links redistribution (class) and recognition (identity) claims, two mutually irreducible elements of social justice, to parity of participation, Axel Honneth's "moral-theoretical monism" (Fraser & Honneth, p. 157) unifies and folds these 'material' (class) and 'cultural' (identity) claims for justice into a broader understanding of moral and psychological discontent due to some form of withheld recognition – which Honneth calls social disrespect. Honneth is thus interested in establishing a 'monist' theory of social justice that connects the psychological and moral well-being of individuals to formal structures of recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 174).

A key component of Honneth's recognition theory, and what will be discussed in this paper, is the linking of Hegel's intersubjective struggle for identity of a subject(s) to recognition claims, and thus to the ethical and moral progress of humanity (Honneth, 2002). Honneth's account of recognition begins before and outside of political and social movements; in what brings subjects to feel social disrespect. Social movements, as Honneth argues, only reveal a segment of social suffering and misery, and do not address the underground struggles that bring claims for recognition into the public sphere. 'Disrespect' is felt when current institutional practices of recognition fail to reflect and address the capacities and needs of suffering groups or individuals. For Honneth, the "moral experience" that can be meaningfully described as one of

‘disrespect’ must be regarded as the motivational basis of all social conflicts (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 157). There are three recognition spheres embedded in this moral order in which disrespect can occur – love (the central idea of intimate relationships), the equality principle (the norm of legal relations), and the achievement principle (the standard of social hierarchy). Appealing to moral progress of a society, subjects can argue that needs in these three spheres are not met within existing forms of recognition and therefore recognition needs to be expanded to include their particular needs (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Social justice is achieved when love, equality, and achievement principles are fulfilled; moral progress is achieved when the subject becomes autonomous (as an individual who has these needs met), and can therefore participate equally in the public sphere (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 115).

From a critical race approach, the foundations of the liberal order, including equality, neutrality of law, legal reasoning, and Enlightenment rationalism are challenged because of the racial ordering of the world. This approach involves the interrogation into the ways in which systems of white-over-colour serve psychic and material purposes for whites (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Troubling the ways in which some groups benefit over others in liberal theories of recognition directly confronts the issue of privilege, in theory and in practice (Gupta, 2001). Blum (1998) asks: when we talk of recognition, we mean recognition by whom? In what context? In what regard? Bannerji (2000) states that recognition is merely a reinscription of the hegemonic recognizer, the ‘master’ who is validated in the name of the Other, yet who validates at will. As Oliver (2001) explains, if recognition is conferred onto the Other by the dominant group, and requires a recognizer and recognizee, patterns of domination, privilege, and hegemony, as well as the master/slave, subject/object relationship are simply repeated. This also creates a “pathology of oppression”; the need for the Other to be recognized by the oppressor, who likely will for their own gains not recognize them at all (Oliver, 2001, p. 9). With the absence of oppositional politics in most recognition theories, do recognition claims from the Other simply facilitate a “mirror for self-gazing” (Bannerji, 2000, p. 148), where the recognizer sees and re-confirms his own superiority through the continued and marked difference of the Other?

What are dangerously concealed in recognition projects are the histories, which come to determine and mark subjects and bodies differently (Ahmed, 2000). Recognition tends to be discussed ahistorically, apart from violence, appropriation, and colonization (Gupta, 2001). To begin to understand how race produces the subject of Honneth’s moral-theoretical monism, we must return to history; to uncover the ontological and productive roots of race, specifically to understand the nature of reality upon which racial classifications of (non)subjects are based. The ontological assumptions that make the existence of a racial hierarchy ‘real’; that which also excludes racialized bodies from several spaces, across time (Anderson, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Mills, 1998; Pascale, 2008; Puwar, 2004; Yegenoglu, 1998), will be discussed below.

Ontology of Race and the Racial (Non)Subject

In her book on racialized and gendered bodies in institutions, Nirmal Puwar (2004) discusses colonialism as the foundation of the fully human, individual white male subject, the irrational woman, and the wild, uncivilized, non-human, non-white figure. The onset of modernity validated pure rational thought as mind over body. In the European imperialist

project, whites are associated with the spirits and the mind, the flight from the body. Non-whites (or savages) are associated with nature, wilderness, and the body (Puwar, 2004). Women, as irrational, are also 'of their bodies', but men are not. Logic and rationality thus become symbolically white and male (Puwar, 2004). The pre-capitalist, modern, European cognition also created the white master and the non-white slave (Anderson, 1991). The exclusion of non-whites and women as persons, as humans, begins in this moment of (non)racial and (non)gendered colonial dominance. Many black and Aboriginal scholars contend that defining racialized bodies as animalistic, natural, or non-human denies their subjectivity and perpetuates dominance (Asante, 1987; Cheney, 2005; as cited in Collins, 1990). "Black Marxism" also begins by tracing the ontology of official non-human, non-personhood that is the black body (Mills, 1998, p. 37). Edward Said (1978) furthers the distinction between the fully rational white male and the non-human racial Other in *Orientalism*, the epistemological and ontological distinction that continues to exist between the west and the east. In the European idea of the Orient, the east is primitive, backwards, heathen, and uncivilized; the west is natural, civil, Christian, and normal. Expanding on Hegel's constitution of the subject as needing to negate the very diversity it produces, Said's western subject is constructed by mediation through the other; the west (as natural, normal) cannot exist without the primitive and backwards east (Yegenoglu, 1998). "I am because we are" (Mills, 1998, p.11; and Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 257), the African saying, purports that the black body does not exist unless in relationship with others. As such, the denial of black existence is not individual; a black body does not exist because blacks as a group do not exist: "The non-existence is racial" (Mills, 1998, p. 11).

Social reality is constructed through a hegemonic lens that rejects the racialized Other (Anderson, 1991). European whiteness is taken as the norm (DeVault, 1999). This is rarely questioned. This social ontology of the world is not just about the racial non-human, non-whites, it is also about the unmarked, non-raced whites. Man's relationship to the universe prevalent in white, male philosophy takes this natural, unmarked personhood for granted (Mills, 1998). The ontology involving the racial non-person, the existence of a racial hierarchy, and/or white supremacy as 'real' explains the exclusion of racialized bodies from several spaces, across time. Stanfield (1985; as cited in Scheurich and Young, 1997) states that the ontologies and epistemologies of the dominant group that have continued to dominate for hundreds of years become so deeply embedded in contemporary society that they are seen to be 'natural', rather than socially constructed throughout history. As Anderson (1991) argues, race and racial representations have less to do with the "truth" and more to do with the material interests they serve.

It is in the context of hegemony and colonization that we begin to examine who (and how) the "subject" comes into being in Honneth's moral-theoretical monism. In particular, we need to trouble how a racialized Other might come to be a full, autonomous subject when, as Mills (1998) states, "reality continues to be racialized" (p. 11), and when the screen through which racialized groups are filtered has been subtly revised and recycled, not radically transcended (Anderson, 1991, p. 246).

If the rational, autonomous, colonial white male subject comes to be constructed and mediated through the animalistic, uncivilized, non-human, racialized non-subject, how might racialized bodies come to be constructed as fully recognized subjects in Honneth's recognition-

theoretical turn? What does the intersubjective component of Honneth's recognition look like if, in accordance with Hegel's master-slave relationship, the white subject's existence as white depends on the non-white, non-subject who, through being conferred recognition to become a full autonomous individual subject possesses a potential threat to and can limit the white subject's freedom? Oliver (2001) uses Franz Fanon's analysis of the struggle for recognition to unsettle contemporary discussions amongst critical theorists. Fanon indicts recognition as the pathology of colonial culture, evoking desire in the racialized body to be objectified in order to be recognized by sovereign subjects (as cited in Oliver, 2001). Oliver argues that in various ways, critical theorists re-affirm this dependency on the dominant culture in order for Others to develop a true, strong sense of personal and group identity. Schaap (2004) explains that if current struggles for recognition are exemplified as a contest of strength, in the dominant member's favour is a history of domination over the subordinate, in which subjectification of the (white) master is won at the cost of the objectification of the (non-white) slave. If the dominant member wins the recognition of his subordinate, it is of no value to him. In the logic of recognition, mutual recognition is always impossible because "the native is not complementary but superfluous to the settler" (Schaap, 2004, p. 528). As such, the politics of racial recognition continuously inscribe the bourgeois white male as the true provider of justice and the bearer of rights; the true subject. The fixed nature of the white subject is further exacerbated by liberal discourses, including Honneth's moral-theoretical monism, which continuously un-mark and normalize the identities, cultures and solidarities of those who confer forms of recognition onto racialized groups and bodies (Pathak, 2008).

Honneth's moral-theoretical monism does not address how subjects and their others are formed outside of his three recognition spheres, nor does he question the absence of love, legal equality, or feelings of merit that constitute claims of recognition in the first place (Oliver, 2001). This, I argue, is one of the ways in which Honneth normalizes the construction of white subjects, and solidifies them as recognizers. In many ways, including through the withholding of love, legal entitlements, and feelings of achievement, racialized bodies perpetually occupy space as subjects-in-waiting, chasing recognition. This is the violence of Honneth's project – without a reference to the racial ordering of the world, the desire for racialized bodies to become fully autonomous, individual, moral subjects is caught up in the logic of recognition as a totalizing end, with no end in sight. Honneth (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) argues that the fulfillment of love, legal equality, and feelings of achievement will allow individuals to learn to see themselves as full members of the community, providing them with a sense of identity and social justice. In the sections to follow I offer that love, legal equality, and feelings of achievement are deeply racialized. In being so, I will argue that Honneth's de-raced critical theory reinforces colonial feelings of ethics and morality for liberal white subjects.

Love – The First Sphere of Recognition

Honneth (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) re-visits Hegel's conception of love: the first stage of reciprocal recognition where subjects recognize each other as needy. This neediness creates a dependency on each other to satisfy each other's needs (Honneth, 1995). Honneth's primary example of a love relationship is that between a mother and child, where in struggle a child realizes that he/she is dependent on a mother with needs of her own. The child attempts to "destroy" his or her mother, while the mother must simultaneously recognize the independence

of the child if she wishes to survive the attacks. The mother must understand the destructive nature of her child in this moment as a reflection of something that is against her own interests, ascribed to the child alone, as an independent person (Honneth, 1995). Honneth (2002) calls this sphere the bodily manifestation of autonomy, where forms of disrespect include torture or rape.

In “Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in 19th Century America”, Sadiya Hartman (1997) writes of her weariness of the “being-for-the-Other”, the moral code that prompts the recognition of the suffering of slaves by substituting one’s (white) body for an Other during in the abolitionist movement (p. 21). Hartman discusses witness John Rankin’s wish to ‘bring close’ the experiences and suffering of black captive bodies. The pain inflicted on the racial body (which, in Honneth’s terms, would constitute disrespect) is stolen by Rankin, and he describes the pain experienced by the slave to his brother as through it was inflicted on his own white body. As Hartman argues, this and other forms of recognition of black humanity during slavery in which the black body becomes an empty vessel for white desire, ideas, values and pleasure become exercises of violence (p.35). The ‘neediness’ of the black body is circumvented in this relationship by the ‘neediness’ of Rankin to empathetically experience the pain himself, in order to gain sensibility for the Other’s suffering. As such, the universal, powerful and dominant body of Rankin travels where it may, into the empty black body whose own experiences of neediness, and lack of love, becomes irrelevant. In the master/slave relationship, this is what makes *racial* mutual recognition and love impossible. Honneth positions love as a dependency that is mutual, between two subjects, however he neglects the necessary relationship in which one is a subject (master) and the other is an object (slave). A master, or subject, is only a master by possessing slaves, or objects. The making of the white (master) subject is impossible without violence against the non-white (slave) object. How then is Honneth’s love sphere actualized between white subjects and racialized Others, given this context? Mutual recognition of love can never fully contribute to a sense of identity, independence, or autonomy for racialized bodies when violence against them is necessary for the securing of the white identity, and when the nature of this relationship is obscured. At the very least, securing identity and self-realization for racialized bodies cannot either be reduced to appealing to the morality of white subjects, as Honneth seems to suggest.

Legal Equality and the Distribution of Rights – The Second Sphere

Honneth’s legal equality sphere is premised on the idea that individual rights should be given in principle to all human beings as free and equal. In “The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts” (1995), Honneth traces the onset of civil rights in the 17th century, political rights in the 18th century, and social rights in the 19th century, and argues that the issue of political and social rights of humans came into being because of the pressure of disadvantaged groups. Honneth (1995) explains that this pressure resulted from feelings of social disrespect; in which various preconditions prevented groups to participate equally in the public sphere, and in the terms of rational agreement. In modern societies, legal equality meant that for individuals to participate equally as free, morally responsible beings, they needed protection from interference, and the resources to be able to contribute to the will-formation of the public. These stipulations guaranteed that one would be able to follow and contribute to the establishment of moral norms, make rational, autonomous decisions regarding moral questions, and follow laws alongside their fellow citizens. Struggles of recognition and rights claims in

modern societies expanded boundaries of participation, so that all morally responsible persons could participate in rational will-formation. Thus, in a society of equal rights, law was created based on the rational agreement and morality of all of its members who participate equally (Honneth, 1995). Universal rights, in Honneth's moral-theoretical monism, are rights that reflect the expanded needs and protections of previously excluded or disadvantaged groups who become equal members of society (Honneth, 2002). Beyond the institutional aspects of rights, in being legally equal "one is (then) able to respect oneself because one deserves the respect of everyone else" (Honneth, 1995, p. 119). In Honneth's view, legal equality and universal rights exemplify a morally conscious and competent order, and the seeing of others as equal to ourselves is also the driving force of a truly democratic society (as cited in Blum, 1998). Yet, as Dhaliwal (1996) argues, exclusions based on race are actually constitutive of the formation of liberal democracies. How is the racial nature of democracy and equality reconciled by Honneth?

In this second sphere, Honneth obscures the racialization of rights in order to preserve the moral center of the white liberal subject. Dhaliwal (1996) asks us not to forget that colonial nation-states established their care for humanity and reinforced the image of imperialism as the backbone of what constitutes a 'good society' through the bestowing of rights. Coleman (2006) argues that in the creation of a liberal state where equality and liberty were to be shared by all, the modern subject excluded the uncivilized, non-human Aboriginal. As Hartman (1997) explains, during slavery the rights of white subjects and citizens were always premised on the subjectification of blacks. In slavery, blacks were bereft of rights not only at the hands of their white owners, but to all whites; and, in turn, white masters had rights over every slave, not just their own (Hartman, 1997). Critical Race Theory (CRT) practitioners and scholars are also highly suspicious of the concept of 'rights' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). After the civil rights movement, the rise of the liberalist notion 'equality for everyone' set up roadblocks to racial progress, which inspired the CRT movement amongst legal practitioners and academics of colour. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) argue that while liberal (white) institutions continuously call for equal rights and opportunity for everyone, they resist programs that ensure equality of results.

A history of the racialization of rights is offered by David Theo Goldberg in his book "Racist Culture" (1993). Enlightenment philosopher J. J. Rousseau recognized that citizens, who through the receiving of rights were able to participate in the general rational will-formation of society, were ultimately moral subjects working toward the social good (Goldberg, 1993). When one had a right to make claims, one was respected for that right, thus respected for embodying morality. Goldberg (1993) explains that the idea of rights has become so attractive because they are synonymous with freedom and choice, in moral, legal and political terms. However, those who use universal rights-based language in the liberal order are exonerated, as Honneth might be, for not disclosing what socially constructed, political, legal and moral systems are already in place, securing the positions of those who grant rights and those who are deprived of them. When liberal orders offer universal rights in theory, in practice the systems that purport to include and embrace all equally are the very systems that devalue racialized bodies in the first place (Goldberg, 1993). Correspondingly, when conflicts over rights are racial in nature, rights conferred come with limits; and outcomes are magnified, distorted, or exaggerated. Goldberg (1993) provides several examples. In the abolitionist movement and soon thereafter, any semblance of granting rights to black (former) slaves was greeted by a stipulation of John Locke

that slave owners receive financial compensation for the loss of their income sources. When racialized bodies became eligible to be admitted to colleges or were hired preferentially as a result of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, less than a decade later counterclaims by whites surfaced declaring reverse discrimination, and a violation of the rights of all to equal opportunity (Goldberg, 1993). The discourse of equal rights and opportunity, that which works in favour of the liberal order, is dangerous. Coleman (2006) argues that the exclusion of Aboriginal and racialized others in spheres of equality and freedom continues to be upheld by the privilege of the civil subject and his legacy of colonial conquest. In this unidirectional or one-sided sphere of recognition, when we conceal the racial history which sets up one set of (white) rights as dependent on the lack or absence of Other's rights, we miss how granting the Other any rights in the social world might destabilize the white subject and his psyche. Equal rights language also works in favour of the liberal order by denying, and justifying racially biased outcomes if no actual rights are violated, especially when all are treated fairly and equally (Goldberg, 1993).

It is in the context of this racialization of rights that I return to the unveiling of Muslim women in Quebec. At the outset of this paper I make the claim that this piece of legislation obscures its historacial nature (i.e., hidden further by the appeal to equal rights for men and women), which Honneth also does to ultimately (re)secure the freedom, autonomy and morality of the white liberal subject. Goldberg's history of the racialization of rights (and subjectivity) begins with the earliest forms of discrimination, based on religion, not race. Non-Christians were deemed immoral because they refused to accept the rewards of Christian salvation. People of Islam in particular were condemned and excluded from "equality" spheres because they refused to convert to Christianity (Goldberg, 1993). It follows that equality in medieval law ultimately meant *equality for each to become Christian* [emphasis added] (Goldberg, 1993, p. 25). But why the need, in Quebec, France, across Canada and the U.S., to unveil the Muslim woman in particular? In European Enlightenment, knowledge (and thus power) had no obstacles. The modern white subject refused to tolerate areas of darkness, and yet the body of the Muslim woman was completely invisible except her eyes. The fear and desire incited in the white subject's encounter with the Muslim woman begins with the realization that she can see without being seen, and that she is not able to be known. Yegenoglu (1998) expands on Said's Orientalism to explain its gendered nature. For the modern white male subject, the real nature of the Muslim woman is concealed, her truth disguised, and she appears in a false, deceptive manner (Yegenoglu, 1998). The veiled woman becomes the true representation of the Orient because deception and dissimulation are also essential characteristics of the Oriental culture. The western white male subject continues to ask what the Muslim woman is hiding behind the veil, what it is about her that is beyond his grasp. The desire to unveil the Muslim woman is rooted in the white subject's realization that there is more to the Orient than he might know, which threatens his stability as the universal knower (Yegenoglu, 1998).

Honneth's "seeing of others as equal to ourselves" (as cited in Blum, 1998, p. 52) in this second sphere of recognition negates the racial history of rights and simultaneously solidifies the white liberal subject's enjoyment of them. Honneth also misses how encounters with the racial Other threaten the white subject's stability and psyche, which is resolved through the administration of equal rights, liberty, freedom, and movement for some subjects and not Others. The legal equality sphere reinforces the historical patterns and causes of racial disrespect that Honneth has yet to find a way to challenge in his critical theory of social justice.

Achievement and Feelings of Value – The Third and Final Sphere

In this final sphere, Honneth offers that social esteem of Others can be fulfilled by society valuing the qualities that characterize people as different. Individuals and groups seeking recognition in this sphere appeal to value pluralism; their capabilities and achievements are unique but also contribute to the social good and to moral progress (Honneth, 1995). Persons seeking a socially determined ‘worth’ for their achievements ask that current forms of recognition to be expanded to include this difference. Only in the recognition of difference can individuals feel valued for their achievements (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Honneth argues that becoming open to different values and disrupting current assessments of achievement generates positive societal esteem not only for individuals seeking recognition, but for all members of society. This is what Honneth refers to as social redistribution; intersubjective judgments of value which promote the realization of societal goals, and which create symmetrical rather than hierarchical relationships between individuals and groups (Honneth, 1995).

This is perhaps Honneth’s most fragile sphere of recognition, as he himself seems to attest to: “The worth accorded to various forms of self-realization and even the manner in which the relevant traits and abilities are defined fundamentally depend on the dominant interpretations of societal goals in each historical case...this cannot be understood to be anything other than an ongoing cultural conflict” (1995, p. 127). Honneth also explains, “The more successful social movements are at drawing the public sphere’s attention to the neglected significance of the traits and abilities they collectively represent, the better their chances of raising the social worth or indeed, the standing of their members” (1995, p. 127). As shaky as this ground might seem, Honneth remains committed to the idea of some moral, ethical, social good that previously excluded individual and groups can contribute to if their social worth is recognized. Honneth’s achievement sphere and the expansion of social worth to accommodate difference is challenged by Schaap (2004), who argues that the values and achievements that the racialized Other brings are often seen as contrary to society’s (white) values and therefore to the social good. In his work, Honneth does not interrogate the values of dominant groups that continue to be presented as universal. As members of the moral order and as already-autonomous subjects, dominant white subjects might review their current assessments of values and achievements with a view to impose them once again, as somehow universally agreed to and as objective (Goldberg, 1993). Honneth once again does not problematize how dominance marks bodies and subjects differently and in this case how race is operationalized through the withholding of feelings of achievement.

In the spheres of love, legal equality, and feelings of achievement, Honneth continues to elide the causes of disrespect that exclude racialized bodies from receiving recognition (Oliver, 2001). Though Honneth’s notion of moral progress and how to measure it is by his own admission “underdeveloped” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 185), his moral-theoretical monism consistently appeals to the morality of citizens and the overall progress of social value norms for recognition to occur in his three spheres. In Honneth’s theory of justice it is morality that sparks desirable intersubjective relationships between subject-citizens (Honneth, 2002). In the section to follow I discuss how morality itself is raced. I argue that Honneth’s moral-theoretical monism reignites sentiments of ‘the more morally evolved white culture’ that is rooted in colonial history.

Race, Morality and the White Subject

The ideology of the moral progress of humanity has been used to justify colonial practices, the destruction of cultures and communities, and the enslavement of non-Western bodies (Seidman, 2004). Goldberg (1993) writes of utilitarianism as a tool for moral progress that was undergirded by race. Utilitarianism is an Enlightenment ideology which determines that the moral worth of an action is measured through the greatest amount of happiness it produces, or in the minimization of the most amount of pain, for the greatest number of people. Goldberg (1993) writes that John Stuart Mill, a primary contributor to the utilitarian philosophy, argued successfully for colonial practices by declaring that it was in the best interests of the uncivilized ('races') not to be left to their own devices. Enlightenment philosophers, such as Mill, successfully avoided talking about racial subordination by appealing to the morality of their own positions, as 'saviours' of the savage, who represented violence, sexual license, and the complete absence of morality. Colonizers thus had the 'good' and 'moral' intentions of bringing wild, animalistic non-humans into moral being, to fulfill the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people (Goldberg, 1993; Puwar, 2004). Enlightenment philosophers and colonial civilized subjects, the true holders of morality, argued that they should govern over the uncivil until raced bodies were properly able to take care of themselves and were ready to assume a correct moral direction (Goldberg, 1993). As Goldberg (1993) explains, the autonomy of all (non)subjects depended on utility, which strengthened imperialist self-governance and their governance over racial Others. The European conquest to colonize and enslave racialized Others thus assumed a moral stance of its own, to fulfill the moral obligation to civilize uncivil bodies so these bodies could acquire the moral sense needed to become autonomous, individual subjects.

Barbara Heron writes of the psychic and spatial investment in the morality and subjectivity of the Northern, white bourgeois development worker in her book "Desire for Development" (2007). Heron explains that it is through the morality of the Northern white worker subject, and the altruistic motivations in the development project (s)he pursues in the discursively constructed "Third World", that the racial and colonial implications of development work become contained (2007, p.55). Although workers may indeed want to create equal relations with some African people, the desire to pursue a "civilizing mission" (Heron, 2007, p. 150) in itself recreates the position of Other for Africans, as well as the superiority and morality of the white bourgeois subject. It is thus crucial for the white worker to "remain innocent in order to protect our moral selves, and in order to continue to make our selves" (Heron, 2007, p. 151). This innocence is maintained through the performance of "goodness" (Heron, 2007, p. 7), a desire to help, and repugnance towards racism. In the (re-)construction and (re-)positioning of power and subjectivity that continues between the North and the Global South, racial thinking inherent to development work and to development workers is simultaneously centralized, denied, and justified.

It is truly astonishing that Honneth creates an entire theory of social justice rooted in morality, which has such drastic racial connotations, pre-and post-recognition. Honneth recycles the very colonial enterprise that justifies violence against and the elimination of the racial Other. Goldberg (1993) reminds us that race continues to bind the morality principle to white subjects. If this is the case, how can Honneth's moral-theoretical monism set up already-moral subjects to recognize lack or what he terms 'disrespect' experienced by disadvantaged groups, when history

dictates that this system of one-sided recognition prevents racialized Others from becoming full autonomous, moral, individual subjects in the first place? As I mentioned earlier, this is the violence of Honneth's project – the desire for racialized bodies to become fully autonomous, individual, moral subjects is caught up in Honneth's logic of recognition and in the liberal order, the very order that prevents racialized Others not only from becoming full, autonomous subjects, but also beyond this, from participating equally in the public sphere.

Within critical theory of recognition, the Other is always wrapped up in the need for recognition from the subject who dominates, limiting the possibility for self-making (Schaap, 2004). Kelly Oliver (2001) suggests that a way to dismantle the dangerously cyclical nature of these 'systems' of recognition is to eliminate the focus on the object and the subject. Oliver argues that we must move away from the Hegelian master/slave dialectic, beyond recognition, and focus on the subjectivity of this so-called Other. Oliver also asks if the (non)subject need always be disrespected in order to have respect, and if injustice is truly necessary for the possibility of justice (2001, p. 47). While Oliver (2001) looks to Fanon's humanism - Others creating meaning and value for themselves rather than to seek recognition (p. 26), and to bell hooks, who argues for the same self-possession (p. 29) to counteract the cycle of violence that the master/slave, recognizer/recognizee relationship brings, neither actually advocates for 'blank slate' subject-positions. I disagree with Oliver's contention that we move away from the origins of master/slave relationship, because in doing so, we risk eliminating histories of racial ordering that are obtuse in most, if not all critical theories of recognition and in many social justice projects. As Jolles (2005) asks, if Oliver presents a pre-oppression subject, who is this subject? How is the subjectivity of one damaged without relations of domination, and how does this subject come to be formed?

Re-vamping Recognition or Witnessing?

Several authors offer possible solutions to counteract the re-inscription of hegemony that recognition brings. Doxtader (2007) suggests that perhaps recognition should be premised on vulnerability rather than morality; an ethical project of deconstructing and even opposing individual identities and subject positions before discussing the Other in any context. Schaap (2004) suggests that perhaps recognition should involve a necessary revealing of assumptions, values and understandings, to make explicit what was formerly implicit. As such, the struggle for recognition "does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at mutual reciprocity. Rather it proceeds from domination to domination" (Foucault, 1984; as cited in Schaap, p. 529). For Oliver (2001), "witnessing" is the 'post-recognition' theoretical turn, and at the heart of creating subjectivity for the Other (p. 168). Oliver asserts that being an eyewitness to oppression and subordination, as well as bearing witness to things that are beyond recognition of others, begins to repair damaged subjectivities, as Others become speaking subjects. In witnessing, a revived sense of agency and response-ability in ethical terms reclaims subjectivity for the Other. The Other is also able to reclaim the humanity in an experience that was stolen, pacified, or turned into 'nothingness' in a colonial encounter. However, race, as Anthony Farley (1997) has written, is a form of pleasure. The pleasure of race is derived from the white subject's continual gaze on the racialized Other's inferiority and subordination. Stories of subordination and oppression, though they may revive the agency of the racialized Other, can be consumed by dominant White subject witnesses for their own pleasure, and to secure their

positions on the 'right side' of the colourline (Farley, 1997). It is not enough, (nor has it ever been enough, I argue) that racialized, self-possessed subjects secure their own agency, or 'self-esteem', through the construction of their stories. How might people of colour be witnesses who gain a sense of agency, but who also disrupt the identities of white subjects and white spaces, institutional or otherwise?

Du Bois' notion of double-consciousness is of central value to antiracism (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Rodriguez, 2006). Ladson-Billings (2000) describes this double-consciousness position as not one of marginalization and oppression but as an *advantage* that racialized bodies have in positions of exclusion and inclusion, having viewpoints from the margins and the mainstream. Wynter (1992, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2000) calls this position liminal; between two worlds or states of understanding. This position is not due to inherent racial difference (i.e. not from experiences of racism, per se) but from the constructed Otherness that moves racialized bodies beyond the conception of self/other that is inherent in the construction of the white, male subject as the norm. To revisit the works of Hegel and Said, the white male subject constructs himself by negating the Other. The racialized subject, however, cannot be constructed out of the negation of the white male subject, because *if he negates the white subject, he no longer exists as the racialized Other*. Thus, the racialized Other moves between two worlds; that of his/her own and that of the white subject's. Ladson-Billings (2000) suggests that double consciousness does not only apply to racialized groups but to all marginalized groups who find themselves on the fringes of the mainstream. For example, we will find more women identifying themselves as feminists than men because women have greater experience with the consequences of gender oppression in mainstream society (Collins, 1990). We can also use the example of people from the poor or working class. They have perspectives on their own experiences, yet they also come to know the dominant class by interacting and participating in how the dominant class functions (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Similarly, while racialized groups have their own experiences as racialized bodies, they also must acquire knowledge and practices of the dominant group, at least minimally. The point of this liminal perspective is that it can reveal insight into how the dominant group operates, through power, to distort realities of the Other in order to maintain and reify that power, and to keep subordinate groups out of the mainstream (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Mills (1998) also argues that some experiences lay outside the dominant group's grasp, and that the defense to be articulated by antiracists is that a marginalized group's access to multiple perspectives and experiences gives her/him a wider-angle view of the social world. As such, racialized bodies do not present something new; they present something familiar from a different angle.

Jean-Francois Lyotard's concept of the differend also helps to explain the value of the liminal stories of racialized individuals and groups for Honneth's particular project. The differend occurs, as Delgado and Stefancic (2001) attest, when the meaning of social justice has conflicting meanings for two groups. Dominant conceptions of social justice will rule unless racialized person(s) express their grievances from the perspective of their own positions as Other *and* in relation to dominance. What is important here is the work that antiracists do to turn a critical gaze on dominance, to expose hierarchies based on race (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Stories from racialized groups can reveal a lot about hierarchies based on race that shape their lived experiences but they can also identify moments of transformation and solidarity that can be carried across racial boundaries. Collins (1990), for example, notes the importance of black

women establishing connections with other subordinated groups with standpoints from the margins, such as white women, black men, and other people of colour. Subordinated groups have their own partial, situated knowledge and perspectives linked to the contexts in which they are created. If these perspectives are shared, and one can “pivot the center” to learn from and validate an-other experience, we can see how hegemonic structures and representations are insufficient in our own lives and the lives of others (Collins, 1990, p. 237). We can better understand how hegemonic views are also partial and situated, and that the supremacy of one way of knowing and operating should be challenged.

Conclusion: On Democracy and Social (racial) Justice

As Nancy Fraser (2003) might suggest, improving individuals’ self-esteem (via Honneth’s pre-political suffering) feeds into the neoliberal project by diverting attention away from changing structural, institutional orders through democratic means. However, is the aspiration of ‘true democracy’ enough in the move towards social justice? This argument might best be settled by Iris Marion Young (2001), who suggests that both deliberative democracy and the activist-outsider are necessary for the social justice project. Young states that when those who exclude attempt to build a political, democratic process to be more ‘inclusive’, it generally fails to include the voices from the margins. The “deliberative democrat” (Young, 2001, p. 41) will argue that the activist wastes his/her time on the outside, that he engages in “interest group politics”, and that social change can only really happen through deliberations between parties where they can come to agreement (Young, 2001, p. 42). The activist-outsider spends his/her time attempting to leverage the demands of individuals and groups suffering from injustice, and will argue that that she/he refuses to participate in democratic systems because they are deeply flawed and manipulative. As Young (2001) suggests, individuals and organizations fighting for social justice will likely move between both spheres of activity throughout their lives. In social justice theory and practice, both are important (Young, 2001). In my work to advance a racial justice that is personal *and* political, I argue that both are necessary.

In conclusion I offer up Mills’ (1998) “global white supremacy” (p. 98) as a political system of racial justice that would radically re-evaluate Honneth’s moral-theoretical monism. It is not the case, by applying global white supremacy, that we necessarily assume that everyone is racist. Nor is it the case that global white supremacy should be the only lens in which liberal democratic critical theories are filtered through. The goal of global white supremacy, as a political and theoretical framework, is to explicitly draw out the racial character of systems. Race is understood to have its own social ontology, autonomy, is extremely pervasive in nature, and structures systems to be advantageous to whites. Global white supremacy explicates how historacial ordering privileges or disadvantages individuals and groups across the globe, structures race(ist) relationships and, as we have seen in Honneth’s case, produces theories of recognition. In global white supremacy “what seems like a neutral starting point is actually already normatively loaded” (Mills, 1998, p. 106). Honneth’s love, equality, feelings of achievement and morality, as I have demonstrated, would certainly take on other meanings in an expanded sense of social justice which includes the explication of race. In theories of social, liberal, democratic justice, if we continue to adhere to the ritual denial of race as our colonial past knows and embodies, we are complicit in the rationalization of a racial order, and we resist the possibilities for progress, change, humanity, and freedom for all.

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