

“Situating Axel Honneth in the Frankfurt School Tradition”

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“I have never had the intention of continuing the tradition of a school...The line of thought that gets attributed, in retrospect, to the Frankfurt School was a response to historically specific experiences with fascism and Stalinism, but above all to the incomprehensible Holocaust. A tradition of thought remains vital by proving its essential intuitions in the light of new experiences; that doesn't happen without giving up those parts of theories that are no longer adequate.”

--- Jürgen Habermas¹

Historical mantles are rarely worn comfortably. The associated expectations can be quite a burden. So it is not surprising that, like Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth refrains from identifying himself as a “Frankfurt School” theorist. In his case, however, there is really no denying the lineage. Not only is he the successor to Habermas’s chair in social philosophy at the University of Frankfurt, but as research director of the Institute for Social Research there, he sits in the office that was once Theodor Adorno’s. At Honneth’s insistence, however, the old furniture has all been replaced.

Insofar as the Frankfurt School tradition represents a contemporary phenomenon at all, it is a diverse approach that has been constantly developing and changing over 80-year history. My aim here is not to provide a definitive account of this lineage -- nor to sort out which members of subsequent generations have “betrayed” the tradition -- but rather to situate Honneth’s own work historically, so as to both highlight certain distinctive features of his approach and provide additional points of entry for the diverse range of readers drawn to his

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work.

I begin by providing a brief, thumbnail sketch of some of the central themes in the first generation of the Frankfurt School. I then look in some detail at how Jürgen Habermas and members of his generation transformed critical social theory, taking it in several new directions. I then take up Honneth’s approach, arguing that it involves a retrieval of some original Frankfurt School themes, but against the irreversible background of the Habermasian landscape and in a political and intellectual climate that gives his approach its specifically *third-generational* character.

1. The Original Frankfurt School

The first generation of the Frankfurt School is relatively simple to identify, since they almost all worked for their namesake: the Institute for Social Research (*Institut für Sozialforschung*) in Frankfurt am Main. After an initial period under Carl Grünberg (1923-8), the Institute gained its recognizable character under the directorship of Max Horkheimer and included Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Otto Kirchheimer, Leo Löwenthal, Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, and Friedrich Pollock.²

The Frankfurt School’s distinctive approach to social inquiry sought to bring about emancipation from ideological blinders by bringing to awareness the material conditions of our own knowledge of the world, a theme inherited from Georg Lukács (and ultimately from German Idealism, if one understands that as the broad tradition extending from Kant through to Marx). In the formulation worked out by Horkheimer,³ the thesis is that the social world can be understood only if it is seen as a product of social activity. The social world thus lacks the “given” character of the natural world and must be seen as our construction. The very

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political implication of this is that the social world *could be otherwise*. This is something that traditional "bourgeois" social science tends to obscure, thereby perpetuating the status quo under capitalism. The task of "Critical Theory," then, involved a form of reflective social science that was able to provide an account of its own origins. In so doing, one could also reveal traces of reason in the material-social world. And the best way to do this, it was felt, is to ground theoretical reflection in the ordinary self-understanding of participants in the social world, particularly in the domain of labor. This was the methodological conviction guiding the original group in the interdisciplinary projects they pursued, working together as a more-or-less coordinated team.⁴ This core focus was complemented by related work in the aesthetics of experience (Benjamin and Adorno) and work in political theory and political economy (Neumann and Kirchheimer). But the guiding concern of the original Frankfurt School was with emancipation through reflective social science, as a matter of articulating the structures of consciousness underlying the experience of the working class in particular.

After the Institute was shut down by the Nazis in 1939, the exiled circle remained relatively intact, especially during the initial period in New York, where they were housed at Columbia University (not, as is often thought, at the New School for Social Research). Horkheimer, Adorno, and the others pursued the defining themes of the first generation—Freudian Marxist analyses of the roots of totalitarianism in mass culture—themes that became the basis for work carried out in Frankfurt, after the Institute for Social Research was reestablished under the directorship of Horkheimer (later rector of the University of Frankfurt). During this second heyday of the Institute (1950-70), the term "Frankfurt School" came to stand for a social-theoretic approach employing methods of qualitative social science to expose the ideological structures responsible for various "societal pathologies."⁵

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With regard to the pathologies on which these analyses focused, one can retrospectively discern two broad forms that they assumed, each of which gets taken up differently by the second and third generations of the Frankfurt School. On the one hand, the Frankfurt School was concerned with pathologies that come into view through the lens of critical sociology, particularly social and especially political institutions. Here the focus is on, for example, the ways in which universities, the media, political party machines, corporations, and so on come to serve various oppressive interests. The other approach pursued by first-generation figures focused on subjective experiences of alienation, disorientation, and reification, and of tracing these perversions of human interiority to capitalist modernity. (As we shall see, one way to think of the subsequent history of the Frankfurt School is that Habermas focused on this second line, while Honneth's aim has been, together with others from his generation, to rehabilitate the more subject-related dimension.)

2. Overlapping Generations: Habermas at the Institute for Social Research

It was at the Institute for Social Research that Jürgen Habermas got his first research job (in 1956), after a couple of post-doctoral years as a features writer for newspapers. But the widespread perception of the baton of Critical Theory being handed from the first generation to Habermas is decidedly misleading, and a brief historical digression seems appropriate to set the record straight. The empirical projects on which Habermas worked during those early years have defined much of his reputation: the critical potential of the student movement, the instrumentalization of public discussion by the media, and Marxian idea that guaranteeing material welfare is a precondition for social justice. But the direction he was taking actually fit uncomfortably within the Institute, which under Horkheimer's directorship had become something quite different from the early days, to the point that Horkheimer kept the copies of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* locked in the cellar of the Institute.⁶ As Habermas summed it up in a 1979 interview: "...I do not share the basic premise of Critical Theory, as it took

shape during the early 1940s, the premise that instrumental reasons has gained such dominance that there is really no way out of a total system of delusion [*Verblendungszusammenhang*], in which insight is achieved only in flashes by isolated individuals."⁷ Already then, Habermas was more geared toward the possibilities of democratic politics and toward the simultaneously theoretical and emancipatory task of revealing the distortions of contemporary politics, and this led to clashes with Horkheimer. What particularly irritated Horkheimer was the implicit activism he perceived in, for example Habermas's introduction to Institute's study of university students and in the long overview article on Marxism commissioned by (and extremely well received by) Hans-Georg Gadamer.⁸ The tensions grew and in a move that represents the rough equivalent of denying tenure (as well as a slap in the face to Habermas's main backer, Adorno), Horkheimer refused to approve Habermas's plan for a *Habilitationschrift* on the public sphere and instead directed him to begin work on a new three-year project for the Institute. Habermas responded by resigning and, with the support of Wolfgang Abendroth (the sole West German Marxist professor of philosophy at the time), Habermas was able to complete his "habilitation"—on the basis of the groundbreaking *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*—and take up a position in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. Habermas returned to Frankfurt two years later (in 1964) as professor of sociology and philosophy, and from the work published in the 1960s, one can see even more clearly how he was pulling away from his mentors at the Institute. What began to emerge as Habermas's distinctive approach to critical social theory was a focus on specifying the conditions under which human interaction would be free from domination. Whereas the first generation had (at least initially) looked to various forms of economic, political, cultural, or psychoanalytic "crisis" as sites of emancipatory impulses, Habermas focused on free interpersonal interaction as it was found in ordinary life and, specifically, in the pragmatics of *coming to an understanding with someone about something*, to serve as the key source of emancipatory impulses.

The end of the first generation's era came around 1970, with the deaths of Adorno (1969),

Pollock (1970), and Horkheimer (1973, but who had already retired to Switzerland much earlier). At the same time, von Friedeburg left the Institute to become Hessian Minister of Education (in 1970, and see through a controversially progressive democratization of the German education system), and Habermas left for Starnberg in 1971. In addition, after the founding of the Social Sciences Department in 1971, the Institute no longer offered courses and thereby became dependent on soft money for funds. As a result, although it remained in operation, the Institute receded as the institutional home of critical social theory in Germany, although that has arguably now changed.⁹

3. Habermas, the Second Generation, and the Search for Normative Foundations

The second generation of critical social theory came of age during the 1970s. By the early 1980s, the major figures of second generation had published major works, secured university professorships, and were producing PhD students. In addition to Habermas, one can think here of Alfred Schmidt, Karl-Otto Apel, Albrecht Wellmer, Claus Offe, and Oskar Negt. Habermas himself spent the 1971-81 in Starnberg (near Munich) as co-director of the "Max Planck Institute for Research into the Conditions of Life in the Scientific-Technical World," where he was able to hire fifteen researchers to pursue research that integrated empirical and theoretical work addressing topics such as societal pathologies, processes of rationalization, legal evolution, ego-identity, communicative competence, moral development, and more.¹⁰ In addition, this was a time when Habermas (along with Ernst Tugendhat and Wellmer, who were both associated with the Starnberg group) was studying analytic philosophy of language as part of developing his universal pragmatics of communication.¹¹ And especially given that this period gave rise to the defining work of the second generation of the Frankfurt School, Habermas's 1300-page *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), it might well look as if this was the second generation's Institute for Social Research, but this time with multi-million-Deutschmark funding and no Nazis at the door. Again, however, the reality is more complicated. Indeed, Habermas recently said in an interview, "For me, it was the worst of times. It was simply a mistake to [go to Starnberg]."¹² It seems that, despite the diversity and

quality of the work being done in Starnberg, Habermas much preferred the smaller-scale and looser group he organized around the 1995-2000 Leibniz project that led to the 1992 publication of *Between Facts and Norms*.¹³ In any event, after he announced his resignation in 1981 and, after a brief appointment at the University of California, Berkeley, returned to Frankfurt to become professor of philosophy (with Honneth as his first *Assistent*). And remarkably, although the philosophy department was housed during those years literally *around the corner* from the Institute for Social Research, Habermas never had much of anything to do with the Institute. "After Adorno's death," second generation sociologist Helmut Dubiel wrote in 1988, "it was decided that the Institute for Social Research would focus—in contrast to Adorno's philosophical and aesthetic interests—on empirical sociology of industry and labor unions. As a result, the current inhabitants of the Institute are much less in a position than Habermas to claim that they stand in the tradition of Critical Theory."¹⁴ These were years in which he focused his energies very little on empirical work and almost exclusively on the defense of reason as a philosophical project, what he terms the "discourse theory of truth and morality."¹⁵

That approach—along with the various related social-theoretic approaches of the second generation—was motivated largely by a sense that the first generation of the Frankfurt School had failed to adequately address the issue of normative foundations. Drawing on Lukács' radicalizing synthesis of Marx's concept of alienation and Weber's thesis of the "iron cage" of Western rationalization processes, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, Benjamin, and others opposed "reification" of the human spirit by capitalist and bureaucratic forces, but its wrongness was taken to be obvious. Insofar as they thought their standards of criticism needed analysis, they offered a quasi-metaphysical account rather than a normative justification. Moreover, despite their aspiration to provide a grounding of their critique in a self-reflective form of social science, Horkheimer and the others could not explain how they could presume to occupy a privileged standpoint from which to expose ideology. In other words, they failed to apply their standard of critical reflexivity to their own theory.

Habermas's own work in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (originally published in 1968) shared some of these weaknesses—something he later acknowledges in his self-critical "Afterword".¹⁶ It thus became the task of *Theory of Communicative Action* to set a new course, one that could provide an adequate underpinning for the analysis of social reproduction, social pathologies, and directions for emancipatory transformation. In Habermas's own words, his aim was to develop "a social theory concerned to validate its own critical standard".¹⁷ Thus Habermas is concerned with "critique" in two senses: in the Leftist sense of pointing out injustices and in Kant's sense of an examination of the conditions for the possibility for something, in this case, of the basis for critique in the first sense.

For Habermas, the normative foundations for critical social theory are to be found in the proper understanding of communicative action, in particular, of the "idealizing presuppositions" that must be undertaken by anyone trying to come to an understanding with someone about something. This approach combines a norm-based theory of how coordinated social action is possible with a "discourse theory" of how claims are justified. According to Habermas's discourse theory, every communicative act carries with it claims to validity (truth, rightness, and sincerity), where the validity being claimed is a matter being able to stand up to criticism under "conditions of discourse," namely, a context of justification that the participants view as beyond reproach (for which he now no longer uses the oft-misunderstood phrase "ideal speech condition"). This "discourse theory" is at the center of his work on moral theory, democratic theory, rationality, and truth.¹⁸ According to Habermas's "communication-theoretic" account of social action, what makes it possible to coordinate action is our ability to come to an understanding with each other about something, where this process of coming to an understanding is again tied to open-ended processes of discursive justification. Indeed, it is our need for social coordination, according to Habermas's social pragmatism, that generates *from within* pressures toward reaching

agreement, thereby unleashing "the rational potential of communicative action."

In addition to providing a "discourse-theoretic" account of normative foundations, Habermas's analysis of processes of communication is *itself* a direct contribution to critical social theory, particularly in his culture-critical analyses of domination in terms of "systematically distorted communication." This is a theme that recurs in a wide variety of contexts, from his attacks on technocratic politics, to his defense of radical democracy, to his reinterpretation of reification in terms of the "colonization of the lifeworld." The key idea is that what is most pernicious in various trends in highly-industrialized societies—bureaucratization, militarism, technocracy, laissez-faire economics, privatization, mediatization, ideologically driven approaches to immigration and social policy, and so on—is the fact that entrenched interests are able to neutralize and squelch the sort of public political debate that would reveal the injustices of the *status quo*. The point—often overlooked in commentators on Habermas—is not the teleological claim that talk is always good but rather that that silencing and muzzling are bad.¹⁹

Habermas's focus on reaching communicative rationality and on progressive learning processes is very much in the Frankfurt School tradition of intertwining the explanation of societal transformations with a critical, normative perspective. But in contrast to the first generation's focus on structures of consciousness and crises of capitalist accumulation, Habermas focuses on general, universal features of communicative action, arguing that these provide a more defensible basis for social critique than the claims about consciousness central to the first generation's approach. This move is not, of course, uncontroversial. Indeed, internationally, Habermas' focus on the universality and unity of reason that has led many contemporary critical theorists to look to not to him but to Adorno, Benjamin, and other members of the first generation for allies in developing their critical analysis.

4. The Second Generation: Radical Democracy and Modernist Reason

The modernist impulse so central to Habermas's work is echoed in the other members of the second generation, albeit to different degrees. Albrecht Wellmer, for example, has sought to develop a version of modernity that retains the aspiration to truth while accommodating the aesthetic and postmodern insight that transparency of meaning, completeness of understanding, and certainty of knowledge are necessarily beyond our reach.²⁰ Karl-Otto Apel first introduced the idea of "discourse theory" before it was picked up by Habermas, and he has been the driving force behind the attempt to put discourse theory on more transcendental foundations. For Negt, von Friedeberg, Offe, and others, the focus has been on trying to make sense of how, in complex societies, the impersonal imperatives of economics and politics can be tamed and kept from taking over more dimensions of social integration in complex societies than is necessary.²¹

None of these theoretical developments occurred in a vacuum, of course. Habermas in particular is a famously engaged intellectual, intervening in debates over the student movement and university reform, the reluctance of Germans (and Heidegger in particular) to come to terms with their Nazi past, the deficits of pacifism in the face of human rights violations, the hijacking of German unification by nationalist fervor and corporate greed, and Germany's new post-national identity as a country of immigrants bound by European and international law.²² But in all these cases, the motivating concern is the same: to restore, defend, and radicalize the universalistic imperatives of procedural rationality, modernist culture, and genuine democracy. This universalistic focus has been the target of numerous attacks, but it is motivated by a profound distrust for German tradition, stemming from the defining experience of this generation's coming-of-age. Habermas has described how, upon learning as a 16-year-old the full scope of the atrocities committed by Germans during the war, "I knew that, despite everything, we would live on in the anxiety of regression, that we would have to carry on in that anxiety. Since then I have cast about, sometimes here, sometimes there, for traces of a reason that unites without effacing separation, that binds without denying difference, that points out the common and the shared among strangers,

without depriving the other of otherness."²³ For Habermas's generation, the reliance on common sense so prevalent in progressive Anglo-American thought is just not an option.²⁴

The second generation's "anxiety about regression" and the felt need for a bulwark against deep-rooted authoritarian and xenophobic traditions in Germany has had three prominent effects. First, it clearly contributed to the second generation's strong emphasis on constitutional principles, human rights, and the law, especially since the mid-1980s.²⁵ Second, it added a great deal of heat to Habermas's confrontations during the 1980s with postmodernism and poststructuralism, which he has tended to see as not simply mistaken but dangerous, for it attacks the primary resource that keeps us from slipping back into barbarism: communicative reason.²⁶ Third, and most significantly, the second generation has tended to see an internationalist orientation as particularly important in the effort to ensure that the insanity Third Reich "never again" returns. Philosophically, this means looking beyond the German tradition in ways that have been considered heretical even in post-war Germany. In particular, Habermas's reliance on Anglo-American philosophy seems at least in part to be motivated by a desire to have German and American intellectual cultures so intermarried as to render absurd the idea of a pure German "*Sonderweg*" (the "distinctive path" between Bolshevism and Americanism that was touted by Nazi intellectuals). In that regard, Habermas has been remarkably successful. Together with Karl-Otto Apel (and the third-generation sociologist Hans Joas), he made philosophically respectable the pragmatism of Dewey, Peirce, and especially G.H. Mead. And, in conjunction with Starnberg collaborator Ernst Tugendhat and the publisher Suhrkamp, he has helped open German philosophy departments to analytic philosophy. By the late 1980s, in fact, the key points of reference for Habermas's graduate students and associates were more likely to be Donald Davidson, Michael Dummett, or John Rawls than Adorno, Lukács, or Marx—a shift that generated quite a bit of confusion on the part of foreign scholars who had gone to Frankfurt in search of "Continental philosophy."

This turn to analytic philosophy represents perhaps the clearest departure from the first generation of Critical Theory—and not merely from Horkheimer and Adorno's prejudices against the banality of all things American. Habermas's insistence on very high standards for justification has drawn him into debates about truth, rationality, normativity, and knowledge that are highly developed in Anglo-American philosophy. And his efforts to cash out his intuition that "traces of reason" are to be found in the deep structure of everyday situations in which people "come to an understanding about something in the world" have led him into the heart of very technical issues in philosophy of language. Initially, this may have been seen as a peculiarity of Habermas's own approach—and, for some, even as evidence that Habermas had left the Frankfurt School tradition altogether—but there doesn't seem to be any turning back now in this regard. Some degree of familiarity with analytical philosophy has become an entry requirement for much of contemporary Critical Theorists.²⁷ Once certain demands for rigorous argumentation have been internalized and once certain technical theoretical issues can no longer be dismissed out of hand, critical social theorists have no alternative but to address these issues. In effect, Habermas's appropriation of analytic philosophy has raised the bar and made critical social theorists accountable for responding to more challenges than ever: they must appropriate the increasingly large *corpus* of the Frankfurt School tradition (along with its roots in Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Freud), stay informed and connected to empirical social science research, and now also answer to challenges from analytical philosophers, who as members of the dominant culture typically feel little or no obligation to fill in the gaps in their background that would make the argumentation of their Frankfurt School interlocutors seem less foreign.

The question is then whether anyone can master the full scope of the Frankfurt School tradition, once the scope has been broadened and the demands raised so high. As sociologists are quick to point out, the typical response to increasing complexity is specialization, and this is what we see happening in the third generation. Perhaps this is a good thing. But there is a danger that the field will become so compartmentalized as to render

implausible the idea that there is such a thing as "Critical Theory in the Frankfurt School tradition." In what sense can it be said that discussions of Adorno's aesthetics, debates about the conceptual status of constitutional rights to freedom of religious expression, and arguments over the exact nature of validity claims are all discussions *within* that tradition? In a sense this is the question of whether there really *is* a "third generation of the Frankfurt School."

5. Axel Honneth and the Third Generation: Unifying Themes and Ongoing Differences

There is, of course, no fact of the matter as to whether a third generation *really* exists.

Schools of thought are complex and dynamic phenomena we construct to bring order to the real-world messiness of publications, dissertations, conferences, patterns of citation, institutional affiliations, research aims, grants, dust jacket blurbs, critical book reviews, and so on. But if one takes the themes and methodologies that are broadly shared by the first two generations and then looks at the institutional and personal connections to the second generation, then the outlines of the third generation begin to take shape—not only in the continuity of the tradition, but also in its distinctiveness.

Institutionally, perhaps one of the most striking things about the third generation is how international it is. There are numerous figures working in this broad tradition all over the world, from Dublin to New York to Rome to Lima to Sydney—often with very strong personal and institutional links to the second generation.²⁸ And many of the most important players in this generation of critical social theory work outside Germany. To keep my discussion manageable, however, I am limiting my focus here to German figures and particularly to philosophers who have been students of second-generation figures (such as Apel, Wellmer, Schmidt, and especially Habermas). With regard to cultural and social history, the political consciousness of this generation is shaped by a different constellation of events than those influencing earlier generations. The original Frankfurt School generation came of age in the struggle to understand the nonrevolutionary consciousness of the majority

of German workers (despite their "objectively revolutionary" situation), and then faced, as mature theorists, National Socialism's crimes against humanity. The second generation came of age in the face of (revelations of) Nazi atrocities, and participated in the transformations around 1968 as mature theorists. The third generation came of age during the upheavals of the late-sixties and the new social movements of the 1970s, and faced as mature theorists the fall of the Berlin Wall, the resurgence of European nationalism, and the acceleration of globalization. And theoretically, they have grappled with the fall of the subject, the disunity of reason, and the challenges to universalistic proceduralist conceptions of justice. Whether as advocates or as critics, their thinking has been shaped by a widespread emphasis on particularity, difference, and pluralism.

Amidst all this diversity, however, Axel Honneth figures as the undisputed gravitational center of the third generation of the Frankfurt School tradition. And since viewing him as such serves to further sharpen the contours of the third generation, I shall begin by briefly recounting his institutional and thematic links to earlier generations and then identify three defining themes of Honneth's work, themes that he shares with others third-generation theorists and that distinguish them as a generation from the first and second generations. I then go on, in subsequent sections, to discuss each of these themes in a bit more detail, highlighting certain areas of ongoing controversy within the third generation.

Although not a student of Habermas's, Honneth did finish his dissertation (directed by Urs Jaeggi at the Free University of Berlin and later published as *Critique of Power*) while on a fellowship in Starnberg (1982-83) while Habermas was nominally director of the "Institut für Sozialwissenschaftler" that served as the temporary successor to the institute he had run with von Weizacker. He was then hired by Habermas as an assistant professor (1983-89), and during that period, they met regularly, frequently co-teaching seminars. Then, after a rapid succession of appointments at the Institute for Advanced Study [*Wissenschaftskolleg*] in Berlin, the University of Konstanz, and (as full professor of political philosophy) at the Free

University of Berlin, he returned to Frankfurt to take Habermas's chair in social philosophy in 1996. Despite these relocations, however, Honneth continued to work at shoring up the infrastructure of critical theory in Frankfurt, as one of the instigators of the biweekly "Humanwissenschaften" section of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper, as the editor of several book series in critical social theory (with publishers Campus, Akademie, and Fischer—rather than Habermas's publisher of choice, Suhrkamp), and as the host to numerous influential visitors to the Frankfurt philosophy department. And finally, in 2001, he assumed the directorship of the Institute for Social Research and has been the driving force behind a large number of new initiatives, including a major new grant from the Volkswagen Stiftung on "Structural Transformation of Recognition in the 21st Century" (for 2007-2010), several projects built around the research focus "Paradoxes of Capitalist Modernization," a book series with Campus Verlag, and the excellent new journal *WestEnd*, founded in 2004 with a subtitle that indicates the ambitions of the new Institute: "*Neue Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*."

Like both Habermas and the original Frankfurt School group, Honneth can be seen as working on three theoretical fronts more or less simultaneously. First, there is the continual mining of the tradition of modern Western philosophy for resources for Critical Theory, from Hegel to Adorno, from Lévi-Strauss to Castoriadis. Second, there is the engagement with social science research: supervising projects at the Institute that involve empirical research, reviewing recent social scientific and historical studies that have implications for central research issues, and incorporating empirical results in his own theory of recognition. And third, there is the development of critical social theory *per se*, particularly of the normative issues and, most specifically, in working out the details of his theory of recognition. And particularly with regard to this last task, Honneth aims to engage not only self-identified critical theorists but also the wider public of mainstream (and, internationally, predominantly analytic) philosophy—a task that, despite the growing acceptance of *inter alia* Hegelian lines of thought, remains a deeply asymmetrical matter of trying to convince English-language

philosophers of the relevance of work being done in other countries.

Against the background of these three areas of theoretical activity and the intellectual trajectory sketched earlier, it becomes possible to identify three central themes in Honneth's work thus far that are recognizably "Frankfurt School" and yet distinctive of him and that set much of the agenda for the third generation: a conception of society and history based on the struggle for recognition by social groups (section 6), a greater attention to the "Other of reason" (section 7), and a contextualization of normative foundations in the deep structures of subjective experience (section 8). These three themes represent points of controversy within the third generation, but they primarily serve to mark out important points of contrast with Habermas and the second generation. In highlighting the contrasts in what follows, however, it is important not to overestimate these contrasts, for Habermas and Honneth share the fundamental conviction that the social institutions that safeguard undistorted forms of intersubjectivity must be based, at least in part, on universalistic principles.²⁹

I now take up each of these themes briefly, discussing in each case the basic line of Honneth's approach, the departure from the first and/or second generation of the Frankfurt School, and the different directions from which Honneth's positions have been challenges within the third generation.

6. The Agonistic Path to Social Justice

Honneth's account of "the social" focuses on the central role of conflict between social groups, rather than between individuals (as is assumed by Hobbesians and rational choice theorists) or between structural entities (as systems theorists, structuralists, and even post-structuralists assume). This reinterpretation of the social was the focus of *Critique of Power: Stages of Reflection of a Critical Social Theory*³⁰. There he argued that, in their own ways, Horkheimer, Adorno, Foucault, and Habermas all end up marginalizing the genuinely *social* dimension of critical theory. What is needed, he argues, is an account of the social that

emphasizes that society reproduces itself through the often conflictual interaction of real social groups, which are themselves the products of ongoing activities of interpretation and struggle on the part of participants. Honneth's theory of recognition—first articulated in *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflict*³¹—is to provide the answer. On this view social groups represent both driving forces of historical development and essential conditions for human flourishing. With regard to the first, historical claim, Honneth is opposing Marxian and Weberian strands of critical social theory that have focused on deep structural dynamics, be it the first generation's focus on the domination of nature by "instrumental reason," or Habermas's analysis of the conflict between "system" and "lifeworld," or Foucault's treatment of disciplinary regimes. Against such "hypostasizing" philosophies of history, and inspired both by his reading of the young Hegel and his generation's practical *and* theoretical involvement with the "New Social Movements," Honneth sees historical development as a matter of the emergence and struggles of social groups. Although he is guided by the Hegelian normative ideal of overcoming diremption (*Entzweiung*) through reconciliation and although he is somewhat more sanguine than many of his contemporaries about the degree to which these social struggles are part of a process of progressive *development*, Honneth's consistent focus on the dynamic, "agonistic" nature of the social world is typical of a generation that is much more attuned to the positive aspects of heterogeneity and ambivalence than Habermas tends to be.

The question of just how *progressive* we can expect the struggles of groups for recognition to be has become a central fault-line within the third generation. In part, this is a question of how to conceptualize the anticipated point toward which these struggles are directed. Especially the normative guiding light of an anticipated point in the future of a social existence "free from pain" sits uncomfortably with the emphasis many third-generation critical theorists place on pluralism, openness, difference, and even the unavoidably tragic character of social life.³² From this perspective, the challenge to Honneth is that he is—despite his pronouncements to the contrary—implicitly wedded to a rather homogeneous notion of

convergence and reconciliation. A related but distinct theme among this generation is the focus of some on creative impulses and on the need for revolutionary imaginaries to complement evolutionary forces—in part as part of a rediscovery of the transformative dimension of aesthetics (including Foucault's aesthetics of existence) and even some fascination with the embrace among some French theorists of the liberating dimension of transgression.³³ For others, however, the recent history of identity politics and nationalist movements serves to highlight how social struggles for recognition are often not a route to social justice but rather an impediment to it. This is clear, for example, in the rather sharp debate between Honneth and Nancy Fraser,³⁴ in which she points to the dangers in holding the aspirations to social justice hostage to the vicissitudes of just any social movement. In part in light of the negative aspects of "identity politics," these theorists argue that the more pressing need is for normative criteria that can provide critical leverage, precisely with regard to the conflicting claims of social groups. And it is thus not surprising that so many critical theorists of this generation are focused on issues of human rights and the conditions for international democratic processes.³⁵ The open question is whether to put more trust in reason as it has been worked out in conceptions of justice and constitutional traditions or rather in the ongoing historical process of transformation of those standards themselves (and whether Honneth can make this anti-foundationalist move without ending up with a contextualism that lacks sufficient critical leverage).

7. Listening Critically to the "Other of Reason"

Honneth's focus on social conflict as the motor of history fits with an intuition of his that is at least as deep-seated: the idea of a "*semantische Überschuss*," that is, a "surplus" of meaning and significance that goes beyond what we can now fully capture, appreciate, or articulate.³⁶ According to Honneth (and this is perhaps the point of closest affinity with fellow Hegelian Charles Taylor), it is with our inchoate feelings, and at the margins of traditions, and more generally in the encounter with the *conflicted* and the *unresolved* that the needed innovative resources for Critical Theory are to be found. As we have seen, this theme is already reflected

in the focus on the agonistic creativity of social struggles, but in his work since *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth has extended his normative view to capture more fully the aesthetic dimension of subjectivity and the emotional basis of moral sensitivity. Against Habermas's more exclusive focus on the individual ego's capacity for self-determination, Honneth has emphasized the creative power of the unconscious. Echoing themes from Castoriadis, from Adorno's concept of the non-identical, as well as themes from the "ethical turn" in postmodernism, Honneth has sought to make room in his critical social theory for the voices that have been silenced and marginalized as the "Other" of reason—while at the same time retaining his commitment to the Enlightenment heritage of emancipatory reason.³⁷

This greater openness to the Other is widespread among third-generation theorists, whether that "Other" is to be found in public domain of pluralistic, multicultural sociality, in the domain of world-disclosive aesthetic experience, or in plumbing the unconscious depths of the self. First, as the neighbor we do not understand, the Other plays a central role in third-generation discussions of individual liberty and respect for cultural diversity within pluralistic, multicultural societies.³⁸ The heightened awareness of issues of integration, cultural identity, and nationalism are very topical, of course, but the attention may also have something to do with the fact that, like the original generation of the Frankfurt School but *unlike* the second generation, several members of the third generation bring their Jewish identity into the discussion.³⁹ Second, as the site of aesthetic experience that challenges and stretches us to envision new possibilities, the encounter with the Other figures in numerous authors' discussion of the emancipatory potential of aesthetic experience, drawing largely on Hegel's and Adorno's work, but often in combination with that of Nietzsche, Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault, and others.⁴⁰ And, finally, there is the Other *within*, the aspects of oneself that elude our attempts at domestication. This is, of course, a central theme in psychoanalysis, which has been gaining renewed attention after being largely neglected by the second generation.⁴¹ In a parallel vein, there is Hans Joas's attempts to accommodate within social theory the *creative* and *innovative* moment of impulse and initiative in a more pragmatist

vein, drawing, like Honneth and Habermas, on Mead's concept of the "I" and the "me."⁴²

8. Normativity, Reification, and the Deep Structures of Subjective Experience

One of Habermas's central charges against the first generation of the Frankfurt School was its normative deficit, and this led to the second generation's focus on universalistic principles of morality, justice, and truth. In light of the points already made, it will come as no surprise that the third generation is skeptical about the abstractness and uniformity they see in these approaches. Instead, they have focused on the importance of attention to the concrete other, the unavoidability of substantive ethical assumptions, the pluralistic character of reason, and the contextual nature of applying standards. The question, however, is how to give these concerns their due while still addressing the concern Habermas highlighted, namely, that the normative principles licensing social critique are not self-justifying.

Honneth's proposed solution is to locate the critical perception of injustice more generally within individuals' negative experiences of having broadly 'moral' expectations violated.⁴³ In lived experiences of denigration and disrespect, he argues, we can see most clearly what it means to deny persons what they deserve. Importantly, however, this cannot be deduced from the outside. Rather, the sense of being wronged emerges *within* the subjective experience of victims of disrespect and finds its expression, as a moral claim, in social struggles. According to Honneth, although some social struggles are driven by self-interested conflicts over resources, once the ideology of instrumentalist reason is undermined, we can see these struggles as also giving expression to moral claims that can serve as normative standards. In many ways, Honneth's approach is thus closer to that of the first generation of Frankfurt School than to Habermas's views, in that he looks to the experience of being subjected to domination (especially in the context of labor) to find the normative core for social critique.⁴⁴

It is out of the history of social struggles that Honneth reconstructs the normative standards for social criticism. The possibility for sensing, interpreting, and realizing one's needs and

desires—in short, the very possibility of being *somebody*—depends crucially on the development of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. These three modes of relating practically to oneself can be acquired and maintained only intersubjectively, through relationships of mutual recognition. These relationships are not ahistorically given but must be established and expanded through social struggles. The 'grammar' of these struggles turns out to be 'moral' in the sense that the feelings of outrage and indignation generated by the rejection of claims to recognition imply normative judgments about the legitimacy of social arrangements. Thus, in place of Habermas's focus on undistorted relations of communication as revealing a standard of justification, Honneth focuses on the progressive overcoming of barriers to full interpersonal recognition, barriers such as legal exclusion and cultural denigration, as well as rape and torture. In this way, the normative ideal of a just society—what Honneth calls, in a phrase intended to synthesize liberalism and communitarianism, a "formal conception of ethical life"—is empirically confirmed by historical struggles for recognition.⁴⁵ We can reconstruct these social struggles as aspiring to secure the fundamental conditions for individual self-realization and self-determination,⁴⁶ but what grounds these normative criteria in the real world is the very real feelings of humiliation and denigration that the oppressed actually feel.

The idea, then is to ground the critique of social structures—and of globalizing capitalism, in particular—in these subjective experiences of social fragmentation and reification.⁴⁷ Drawing on themes found in the early writings of Hegel, Marx, and Lukács,⁴⁸ Honneth aims to keep alive a sense of "romantic anti-capitalism" against the hegemonic anti-utopianism of current market Liberalism, at least in this sense: that critical social theory must foster a sensitivity to the devastating personal suffering caused by market forces.

In several regards, Honneth's approach to normative issues fits into a broader concern within the third generation with issues of particularity, contextuality, and substantive, non-proceduralistic principles. For example, many of those working explicitly on normative

theory have typically focused on the "messier" dimensions of application, contextual justification, the role of emotions, the Gilligan-Kohlberg debate over an "ethics of care," judgments of appropriateness, evaluative claims about the good life, and applied ethics generally.⁴⁹

At the same time, however, Honneth's focus on subjective experience as the point of departure for his social critique and moral evaluation has not convinced everyone in his generation of the Frankfurt School. To begin with, there is the concern that subjective experiences of humiliation are potentially fickle bases for criticism, in that *feeling hurt* seems immune to criticism. As Nancy Fraser put this objection in their recent debate: "To stress the victim's subjective feelings of injury is to endanger the possibility of a democratic adjudication of justice claims."⁵⁰ This is of a piece with plenty of third-generation work that is closer to Habermas and to left-leaning procedural political theories of welfare rights, radical equality, and social justice. One way in which critical social theory can develop is along these lines, with theoretical principles of justice grounding critiques of globalizing capitalism.

In his most recent work, however, Honneth has continued to maintain that the focus of social critique—both in his justification and its target—should be the pathological effects on subjects generated by certain aspects of contemporary capitalism. In further developing his approach in his 2005 Tanner Lectures on reification⁵¹ and in his recent discussions of "paradoxes of capitalism,"⁵² he continues to frame his normative critique as part of an analysis of the negative experiences generated by pathological social structures. It is like that it will continue to be one of the key points of dispute within the third generation of Frankfurt School critical social theory. And, ultimately, this is a debate how to understand contemporary capitalism: does its pathological character lie primarily in the subordinating maldistribution it creates or more directly in what it *does to people*, its reifying and humiliating effects?

In a sense, what one sees here is a battle between the first and second generations being fought out by members of the third generation. And, to return to the epigram from Habermas with which I began, it is the reflexively critical stance that keeps the Frankfurt School a vital tradition.⁵³

Notes

¹ Habermas, "Bemerkungen zu Beginn einer Vorlesung," in *Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), 209 (my translation).

² For an interesting discussion of the comparison between the "inner circle" of the first generation, and the particularly interesting outer circle (which includes, for example, Walter Benjamin), see Axel Honneth, "Critical Theory," in *Social Theory Today*, ed. A. Giddens and J. Turner (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 347ff. For an overview of the Frankfurt School's history, see Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance*, trans. M. Robertson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994); Wiggershaus, *Jürgen Habermas* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2005); Helmut Dubiel, *Theory and Politics: Studies in the Development of Critical Theory*, trans. Benjamin Gregg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985); Zoltán Tar, *The Frankfurt School: The Critical Theories of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977); Helmut Dubiel, *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft*, 3rd edition (Weinheim: Juventa, 2001); and Ludwig von Friedeburg, "Geschichte des Instituts für Sozialforschung," <http://www.ifs.uni-frankfurt.de/institut/geschichte.htm> (last consulted on 12 February, 2007). It should perhaps be added that my perspective here undoubtedly reflects my own "knowledge interests" and my own experiences as a student of Habermas and Honneth (in 1987-88 and 1992-3), as a regular visitor to Frankfurt since then, a translator of their work, and a co-author with Honneth.

³ See especially Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in his *Critical Theory* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972; originally 1937), 188ff.

⁴ The results of this interdisciplinary research were published in the house journal, *Die Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* ["Journal for Social Research"] until the Nazis closed the Institute.

⁵ That said, we also already find in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (from the exile period) early indications of the first generation's turn away from social theory toward the more resigned stance found in Horkheimer's late writings on religion and Adorno's aphoristic aesthetics.

⁶ See Habermas's interview with Honneth et al, "Dialectics of Rationalization," in *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas*, ed. Peter Dews (London: Verso Press, 1986), p. 95.

⁷ Habermas, "Political Experience and the Renewal of Marxist Theory" (interview with Detlef Horster and Willem van Reijen), in Dews, *Autonomy and Solidarity*, p. 78.

⁸ The two texts here are: *Student und Politik* and "Literaturbericht zur philosophischen

Diskussion um Marx und den Marxismus," *Philosophischer Rundschau* 5 (1957): 165-235. For a discussion of Horkheimer's attitudes toward Habermas—and Gadamer's active support of Habermas's career—see Wiggershaus, *Jürgen Habermas*, 41-51.

⁹ For current information on the current activity of the Institute, see the excellent web site: <http://www.ifs.uni-frankfurt.de>.

¹⁰ Particularly important for this new direction were the influence of developmental psychologists Rainer Döbert and Gertrud Nunner-Winkler, the social evolutionist Klaus Eder, the sociologists Helmut Dubiel and Ulrich Rödel, and the Heideggerian *cum* analytic philosopher Ernst Tugendhat.

¹¹ Many of the writings from the Starnberg period can be found in *Vorstudien und Ergänzungen zur Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), partially translated in *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction: Preliminary Studies in the Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Barbara Fultner (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000).

¹² The quote comes from an interview conducted by Rolf Wiggershaus with Jürgen Habermas on January 27, 2003 at his home in Starnberg, as part of the preparation of Wiggershaus's book, *Jürgen Habermas*, and is quoted on pages 111-2 therein. See also, Habermas, "Das Starnberger Debakel. Ein Rücktritt und eine persönliche Erklärung. Warum ich die Max-Planck-Gesellschaft verlasse," *Die Zeit*, May 8, 1981.

¹³ See Habermas's remark on how much better the Leibniz group worked: "Compared with my time in Starnberg, I have to say: that's the way to do it" (quoted in Wiggershaus, *Jürgen Habermas*, p. 126). The Leibniz group included Ingeborg Maus, Rainer Forst, Günter Frankenberger, Klaus Günther, Lutz Wingert, and the late Bernhard Peters.

¹⁴ Dubiel, *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft*, 13. Interestingly, Dubiel became director of the Institute from 1989-97, although not much really changed until 2001.

¹⁵ See especially the essays collected in *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (German, 1988) and *Truth and Justification* (German, 1999).

¹⁶ Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).

¹⁷ Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), xli.

¹⁸ See especially the essays in the excellent collection *On the Pragmatics of Communication*, ed. Maeve Cooke (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998) and *Truth and Justification*, trans. Barbara Fultner (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

¹⁹ See, for example, Habermas's critique of Rawls as allowing "gag rules" in the interest of social stability, Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism," *The Journal of Philosophy* 92 (1995): 109-31.

²⁰ Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism*, trans. David Midgley (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

²¹ See, for example, Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, ed. by John Keane (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984) and Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

²² For an overview, see Robert C. Holub, *Jürgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

²³ Habermas, *The Past as Future: Interviews with Michael Haller*, trans. and ed. Max Pensky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 119-20.

²⁴Thus, the pragmatist approach to social criticism taken by Americans such as Richard Rorty or Cornell West is simply not an option for Habermas. It may seem ironic that someone so theoretically committed to deliberative democracy and pragmatism has as little faith in common sense as Habermas does. Part of the skepticism has to do with German history, but it also has to do with his theoretical commitment to a vigilant conception of critical reason, according to which we find, in the everyday practices of ordinary individuals, ideas of truth and moral rightness that transcend any settled common sense and challenge the taken-for-granted authority of traditions we inherit. This is a key point of contention in his debates with Hans-Georg Gadamer, a translation of which can be found in Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, eds., *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Aristotle to Ricoeur* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989). This skeptical stance toward hermeneutics and common sense is much less prominent among members of the third generation.

²⁵In the case of Habermas, see "Law and Morality," trans. Kenneth Baynes, in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 8, ed. S.M. McMurrin (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 217-79; *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996); and the 1995 debate with Rawls in *The Journal of Philosophy* (cited above).

²⁶See esp. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, and the essays in *The New Obscurity*.

²⁷Because I am focusing on those members of Habermas's generation who have joined him in engaging, at least to some degree, analytic philosophy, I will not have much to say in what follows about members of the second generation who either have been concerned exclusively with empirical studies (von Friedeburg and Nunner-Winkler) or have restricted themselves to keeping alive the flame of the older generation (Alfred Schmidt).

²⁸It could be argued that the tradition is being kept alive as much outside Germany as within by such figures as Andrew Arato, Kenneth Baynes, Seyla Benhabib, Jay Bernstein, James Bohman, Susan Buck-Morss, Jean Cohen, Peter Dews, Alessandro Ferrara, Jean-Marc Ferry, Nancy Fraser, David Held, Dick Howard, David Ingram, Martin Jay, Douglas Kellner, Thomas McCarthy, David Rasmussen, William Rehg, Gillian Rose, Steven Vogel, Georgia Warnke, Stephen K. White, Joel Whitebook, and others—many of whom studied with Habermas or Marcuse—as well as by second-generation figures as Richard Bernstein, Fred Dallmayr, and Agnes Heller. At the same time, it must be said that few outside Germany follow the Frankfurt School tradition of combining interpretations of classic texts (Hegel, Marx, Freud, Lukács, etc.) with both critical social theory and social scientific research.

²⁹Like Habermas, Honneth criticizes Foucault, Lyotard, and other neo-Nietzscheans or postmodernists with—as he puts it with regard to Lyotard—becoming "ensnared in the premises of his own thought; the antipathy to universalism forbids a solution to the very problem which he came up against with his demand for an unforced pluralism of social language-games. For, if recourse to universal norms is on principle blocked in the interests of a critique of ideology, then a meaningful argument in support of the equal rights to coexistence of all everyday cultures cannot be constructed" ["An Aversion Against the Universal: A Commentary on Lyotard's Postmodern Condition," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 2 (1985): 155].

³⁰German: Suhrkamp, 1986. English, translated by Kenneth Baynes, MIT Press, 1991.

³¹Translated by Joel Anderson (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1996). German original: Suhrkamp, 1992.

³²Christoph Menke, *Tragödie im Sittlichen: Gerechtigkeit und Freiheit nach Hegel*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996.

³³See, for example, Wellmer student Christoph Menke's book, *The Sovereignty of Art:*

Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida, trans. Neil Solomon (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998). And here, contemporary theorists can draw inspiration from the writings of first-generation thinkers Marcuse and Adorno.

³⁴Fraser and Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, trans. Joel Golb, James Ingram, and Christiane Wilke (London: Verso, 2003).

³⁵Hauke Brunkhorst, Wolfgang R. Köhler, and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, *Recht auf Menschenrechte: Menschenrechte, Demokratie und internationale Politik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1999); and Lutz-Bachmann, Matthias and James Bohman, *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.

³⁶Axel Honneth, "Gerechtigkeit und kommunikative Freiheit. Überlegungen im Anschluss an Hegel," in Barbara Merker, Georg Mohr, and Michael Quante (eds.), *Subjektivität und Anerkennung* (Paderborn, Mentis, 2004), 225.

³⁷On this range of issues, see especially "The Other of Justice: Habermas and the Ethical Challenge of Postmodernism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, ed. Stephen White (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 289-323; "Decentered Autonomy: The Subject after the Fall" in *The Fragmented World of the Social*, 261-71; and section 1 of his "Rejoinder" in *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*, ed. Bert van den Brink and David Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also the other essays collected in Honneth, *Das Andere der Gerechtigkeit: Aufsätze zur praktischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000), and the discussion of "self-trust" in Joel Anderson and Axel Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice," in *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism*, ed. J. Christman and J. Anderson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 133-5.

³⁸Frankenberg, Günter and Ulrich Rödel, *Von der Volkssouveränität zum Minderheitenschutz*. Frankfurt, 1981; Peters, Bernhard. *Die Integration moderner Gesellschaften*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993; Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005); and (fourth-generation Frankfurt School theorist) Rainer Forst, *Contexts of Justice: Political Philosophy beyond Liberalism and Communitarianism*, trans. J.M. Farrell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

³⁹Micha Brumlik, Gertrud Koch, and Martin Löw-Beer have worked hard to keep issues of the Holocaust and the place of Jews in Germany high on the cultural-political agenda, in part through the impressive but short-lived journal *Babylon* (which ceased publication in 2002). Although the first generation was predominantly Jewish, the second generation includes, to my knowledge, only one Jew, namely, Tugendhat, who initially returned to his native Venezuela after retirement, in part because of the difficulties he faced as a Jew in Germany; see his *Ethik und Politik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992). He now lives again in Germany.

⁴⁰Fink-Eitel, Hinrich. *Die Philosophie und die Wilden: über die Bedeutung des Fremden für die europäische Geistesgeschichte*. Hamburg: Junius, 1994. Josef Früchtl, *Ästhetische Erfahrung und moralisches Urteil: eine Rehabilitierung*. Frankfurt Suhrkamp, 1996. Seel, Martin. *Die Kunst der Entzweiung: zum Begriff der ästhetischen Rationalität*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985; Gertrud Koch, "Was ich erbeute, sind Bilder". *Zur filmischen Repräsentation der Geschlechterdifferenz* (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld Verlag, 1988).

⁴¹See, for example, Löw-Beer, Martin. *Selbsttäuschung: Philosophische Analyse eines psychischen Phänomens*. Freiberg: Alber, 1990; as well as Honneth, "Postmodern Identity and Object-Relations Theory: On the Supposed Obsolescence of Psychoanalysis," *Philosophical Explorations* 3 (1999): 225-42.

⁴²Hans Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Paul Keast (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁴³This is the central theme of *The Struggle for Recognition*, esp. chapters 5, 6, and 8. For Honneth's own account of how he came to this position, see Honneth's "Afterword to the Second German Edition (1988)," reprinted as a preface in the English translation of *Critique of Power*.

⁴⁴ See Honneth, "Eine soziale Pathologie der Vernunft. Zur intellektuellen Erbschaft der Kritischen Theorie," in *Axel Honneth: Sozialphilosophie zwischen Kritik und Anerkennung*, ed. Christoph Halbig and Michael Quante (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 9-31.

⁴⁵ Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, ch. 9.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Anderson and Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice."

⁴⁷ In addition to Honneth's collection of essays, *Desintegration* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), see also Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. M. Ritter (London: Sage, 1992) and Gerhard Schulze, *Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursociologie der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1993).

⁴⁸ Honneth, "A Fragmented World: On the Implicit Relevance of Lukács' Early Work," in Honneth, *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. Charles W. Wright (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 50-60.

⁴⁹ E.g., Matthias Kettner and Karl-Otto Apel, eds. *Zur Anwendung der Diskursethik in Politik, Recht und Wissenschaft*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992; Brumlik, Micha. *Advokatorische Ethik : zur Legitimation pädagogischer Eingriffe*. Bielefeld: KT-Verlag, 1992; Nagl-Docekal, Herta and Herlinde Pauer-Studer, eds. *Jenseits der Geschlechtermoral: Beiträge zur Feministischen Ethik*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1993; Wingert, Lutz. *Gemeinsinn und Moral*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993; Günther, Klaus. *A Sense of Appropriateness: Application Discourses in Morality and Law*. Translated by John Farrell. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ Nancy Fraser, "Distorted Beyond All Recognition: A Rejoinder to Axel Honneth," in Fraser and Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, trans. Joel Golb, James Ingram, and Christiane Wilke (London: Verso, 2003), 234, note 4.

⁵¹ Honneth, *Verdinglichung: Eine anerkennungstheoretische Studie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995).

⁵² For example, Honneth, "Organisierte Selbstverwirklichung: Paradoxien der Individualisierung," in *Befreiung aus der Mündigkeit: Paradoxien des gegenwärtigen Kapitalismus* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2002), 141-58.

⁵³ In places, the present essay builds on an earlier essay, entitled "The 'Third Generation' of the Frankfurt School" and published in *Intellectual History Newsletter* 22 (2000): 49-61. In preparing that version, I benefited from comments from Casey Blake, Howard Brick, Bert van den Brink, Rainer Forst, Axel Honneth, Pauline Kleingeld, Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, Thomas McCarthy, Kevin Olson, Thomas Schmidt, and Chris Zurn.