NORMATIVITY IN CRITIQUE: HOW THE THEORY OF SUBJECTIVATION ADVANCES THE THEORY OF RECOGNITION[1]

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Abstract: This paper provides an overview of the contemporary theories on critique and normativity. By conceptualizing the tensions and convergences between critical and normative theory, contemporary scholars argue that critical theory is normative or at least possesses normative content. The focus is placed on the theory of recognition and the theory of subjectivation. The paper asserts that the normative content of critical theory — universal norms of justice — manifests as a critique of inequality and injustice, a perspective prominently articulated in the contemporary theory of recognition developed by Axel Honneth, Franck Fischbach, and Emmanuel Renault. Both Axel Honneth and Judith Butler establish a closer link between Foucauldian critical theory and the objectives of the theory of recognition. Drawing on Foucault's critique of subjugation, Butler highlights the connection between recognition and subjectivation, emphasizing the convergence of self-recognition and the constitution of the self as a subject. Thus, the theory of recognition, as a critical theory with normative content, finds its own foundations in Foucault's critique of subjugation. In this context, the concept of subjectivation emerges as a central category in the further development of the theory of recognition.

Keywords: critique, subjection, subjectivation, normativity, reification, intersubjectivity, recognition, misrecognition.

Introduction

Beginning with the works of Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth, critical theory has incorporated the question of normativity. Initially regarded as conflicting forms of social analysis — exemplified by Michel Foucault's critique of Habermas — contemporary literature increasingly characterizes the opposition between critical and normative theory as "a discursive impasse" (Judith Butler), arguing for the normative content of critique. Butler contends that the practice of critique asserts universal rights rather than merely questioning them. Expanding on this claim, I argue that critical theory's pursuit of universal rights and logical foundations — as demonstrated by Emmanuel Renault and Robert Brandom — provides evidence that critique functions effectively as an instrument of social transformation. Thus, normative theory is not the antithesis of critique but rather its foundation and consequence, just as the collective or individual subject emerges as a result of subjectivation through critical engagement.

Critique is possible insofar as its normative content enables the exposure of injustice and inequality faced by individuals who are not recognized as subjects with full rights. It is precisely this normative content — the recognition of the universality of rights — that serves as the basis for critical theory. However, normative content always plays a dual role: on the one hand, it establishes universal principles of moral and logical equality among subjects (an argument developed by Honneth, Renault, and Brandom); on the other hand, it functions as the source of normativity as a principle of violence (Foucault, Butler). From the perspective of some critical approaches, "what were thought to be normative achievements were historically premised on, and continue to functionally presuppose, domination and exclusion both at a societal and global level" (Celikates & Flynn 2023). Therefore, despite recent efforts to describe critical theory in terms of normative content (e.g., Lorenzini and Tazzioli), including within the framework of recognition theory (Honneth, Renault), the contradiction between normativity and critique remains unresolved. In this context, Foucauldian critique regains its relevance, as it redirects attention to the origins of the problem of norm and normativity in the context of subjectivation as resistance to violence.

Following Honneth's approach, the aim of my paper is to reformulate the problem of conflict and convergence between critical and normative theory in terms of recognition. Honneth proposes understanding "the concept of recognition as a normative groundwork for a critical theory of society" (Honneth 2008: xii), encompassing social, political, and moral philosophy. This approach is further developed by

Emmanuel Renault, who argues that contemporary recognition theory is inherently normative. The very encounter with normative demands occurs when subjects experience a sense of disrespect (Honneth) or injustice (Renault). That is, according to Honneth, the principle of recognition itself contains a normative component. From Butler's perspective (2001), Foucault's concept of critique significantly contributes to normative theory. Consequently, recognition theory should be understood as an extension of Foucauldian critical-normative theory, with recognition functioning as both a strategy of subjectivation and a regime of truth.

In this paper, I adopt the premise that the struggle for recognition, as well as the process of recognition itself, constitutes a strategy of subjectivation. Butler asserts that subjectivation is revealed through the analytics of the regime of truth: "self-making and desubjugation happen simultaneously when a mode of existence is risked which is unsupported by what he calls the regime of truth" (Butler 2001). Lorenzini's arguments further allow recognition to be understood not only as a strategy of subjectivation but also as a regime of truth (Lorenzini 2023). Analysing recognition within an epistemological framework and examining speech acts through the lens of critical theory, Lorenzini demonstrates that recognition functions as a regime of truth.

I argue that, as a strategy of subjectivation, the process of recognition is both the result of critical engagement and the means of its further transformation through the reexamination of constructed norms. In the history of philosophy, not only the concept of critique has been transformed (from Kant's strict investigation to Foucauldian critique of the historical foundations of ourselves as subjects), but also the concept of norm. Contemporary recognition theory continues to employ the concept of norm, but not in order to determine a subject's conformity to established norms; rather, it aims at transforming subjects through the critique of norms. The concept of recognition as subjectivation, examined here, embodies Foucauldian critique in Butler's later works (Butler 2009a). I argue that it is precisely the concept of subjectivation that reveals the critical significance of the contemporary concept of recognition.

The concept of recognition (German: Anerkennung), originally a Hegelian notion, embodies a contradiction between what *is* and that which challenges its legitimacy. This intersubjective struggle manifests as recognition by the Other, emerging from the conflict between the dominant and the subordinate (Hegel's master-slave dialectic), or as *acknowledgment* in the process of perlocution (a reinterpretation of speech act theory in Lorenzini's work), or even as a *gift* (Ricoeur). This conceptual richness has established recognition as a central concept

in contemporary critical theory, encompassing epistemological questions as well as the analysis of exchange and gift relations.

However, the counterpart to recognition — *misrecognition* — deserves particular attention in the normative definition of critique. If recognition is inseparable from normativity, which constitutes its very condition, then misrecognition represents a concept of critical theory that lacks normative content. To be an unrecognized subject means to exist within a space of absent meanings. Legal norms cannot be applied to misrecognized subjects. In essence, misrecognized subjects — whether individual or collective — are deprived of humanity. Misrecognition also plays a crucial role in social relations: critiques and justifications of capital punishment, abortion, foreign intervention in local conflicts, and similar issues all rely on shifting subjects between the categories of the recognized and the unrecognized.

By reformulating the problem of normative content in critique through the framework of recognition theory, I argue that the normative component of contemporary critical theory is both the consequence and the result of recognizing subjects as ethical, political, and legal agents. Ongoing debates, reflected in social movements and emerging academic disciplines (Gender Studies, Feminist Studies, Black Studies, etc.), reveal newly constructed subjects and their struggle for recognition as entities to whom the full spectrum of universal moral and political laws should apply.

Thus, viewing the struggle for recognition as a strategy of subjectivation, as well as a distinct *regime of truth*, enables a positive articulation of critique. By possessing normative content, critique — when understood through the lens of recognition theory — offers a framework for describing the prospects of individual subjectivation.

The Theory of Recognition as Normative and Critical Theory: Is Opposition Possible?

Several approaches to the historical study of the concept of recognition can be identified in the academic literature:

– The history of ideas (Ricœur 2006; Honneth 2020);

– The study of the history of the concept of recognition within the context of French social anthropology (Caillé 2004);

– Historical-philosophical analysis (Butler 2012; Fischbach 1999);

– The pragmatic semantics of Hegel's concept of recognition (Brandom 2007, 2019).

First, these approaches can be distinguished in terms of their historical objectives. Ricœur, Honneth, and Brandom do not analyze the

contribution of Alexandre Kojève as a key source for the contemporary theory of recognition. In contrast, Fischbach and Caillé examine the evolution of the concept of recognition specifically in light of Kojève's role in shaping the contemporary interpretation of Hegel's concept of recognition.

Second, these approaches reflect a contrast between political and ethical strategies of recognition. If the theories of Ricœur, Honneth, and Brandom can be classified as normative theories of recognition, then the concepts developed by Butler and Fischbach are part of the critical theory of the struggle for recognition. However, upon closer examination of Butler's theory, it becomes evident that critical and normative theories cannot be strictly opposed to one another but rather constitute a false dichotomy: "…the very debate in which the strong normative view wars with critical theory may produce precisely that form of discursive impasse from which the necessity and urgency of critique emerges" (Butler, 2001). Butler points to the impasse of opposing Foucault's and Habermas's theories, in which critique is set against the pursuit of objective rationality. By emphasizing this impasse, Butler highlights that normativity in critique — specifically ethical normativity — concerns the task of self-constituting, that is, subjectivation and the rethinking of norms. Renault, following the same principle, has reformulated German, French, and American theories of recognition into a unified critical theory that includes a normative component and aspires to be normative itself. As Renault's research demonstrates, the political dimension of recognition theory is inseparable from ethics, and the concept of recognition cannot be considered independently from the concept of justice. However, as we will see in the second part of this article, by rejecting the opposition between critique and norm, Butler shows that critique itself is directed toward the constitution of ethical norms in the process of subjectivation. The search for epistemic foundations to justify the objective character of norms (e.g., Habermas's attempt to revise the concept of reason) was not sufficient or convincing either for Foucault or for Butler, since in the regime of truth it is impossible to separate knowledge from power.

Today, critical theory continues to evolve along multiple trajectories. One such trajectory is the development of Frankfurt School critique through Habermas and Honneth. For instance, French researchers (Fischbach, Renault) establish connections between Frankfurt School critical theory and the French development of Marxism. These studies primarily address themes such as capitalism, labor, social theory, and injustice. Honneth's work has had a significant impact on contemporary analyses of injustice. His first major work on critique

(*Kritik der Macht: Reflexionsstufen einer kritischen Gesellschaftstheorie*, 1985) built a bridge between Foucault and the Frankfurt School. However, this text was not translated into French until 2016 (Honneth, 2017), meaning that post-Foucauldian critical theory and German recognition theory developed in parallel. This underscores the need for renewed attention to Foucault's role in the development of recognition theory. As Foucault himself noted, had he been familiar with the Frankfurt School earlier, his research on power might have taken a different direction (Trombadori & Foucault, 1978).

Honneth's theory, which is widely recognized in France today, represents a dual return of recognition theory to the French intellectual landscape. First, it marks a return to the theme of recognition as formulated by Kojève in the French context during the 1930s and 1940s — a theme that, while profoundly influencing the development of German critical theory in the 1980s and 1990s, had largely faded from French discourse. Second, it signifies a renewed engagement with Foucault's critical legacy, the importance of which is increasingly emphasized by Honneth's followers. This trajectory of critical thought within the European context evolved in parallel, simultaneously enriching both traditions. From Honneth's perspective, the theme of recognition constitutes a continuation of critical theory (Honneth, Fœssel, Dilmaghani, & Genel 2008).

Fischbach, in his critical theory, shifts from Lukács' concept of reification to reification as "loss of the world"[2] through the theory of recognition. Honneth reintroduces Lukács' notion of reification into contemporary critical theory, thereby reopening the question of subjectivity to critically reassess the concept of consciousness. Consciousness is not the source of reification but its result. As Fischbach points out, "...for A. Honneth, the goal is to demonstrate that the theory of recognition is capable of productively appropriating the old Marxist concept of reification for itself" (Fischbach 2009: 99)[3]. Drawing on key concepts from Marx, Lukács, Heidegger, and Honneth, Fischbach questions the nature of human alienation. If reification constitutes the "second nature" of human beings (Fischbach 2009: 100), forming the basis for the constitution of their subjectivity, then "the alienation of the subject is not its reification, its thingification, but its withdrawal from the world, as it implies a de-objectification that constitutes the

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2   "La perte du monde" (Fischbach 2009: 7).

3   "Il s'agit donc pour A. Honneth de montrer que la théorie de la reconnaissance est capable de s'approprier de façon fructueuse pour elle-même le vieux concept marxiste de réification" (Fischbach 2009: 99).

subject as such" (Fischbach 2009: 99)[4]. The world is lost to the subject because of the process of reification. Reification, according to Honneth, is the "forgetfulness of recognition" (German: Anerkennungsvergessenheit) (Fischbach 2009: 105), manifesting in the treatment of individuals as objects. Recognition, by contrast, is grounded in a sense of connection.

From Fischbach's perspective, Lukács' mistake was to treat the subject as a pre-existing given and to neglect the conditions for the formation of this mode of subjectivity (Fischbach 2009: 111–112). This issue is crucial for contemporary critical theory, which increasingly aligns with normative theory: Foucault, Butler, and Lorenzini emphasize that critique entails understanding the subject as a product of relations, constitution, and other formative processes. Critical work consists in identifying the conditions of subjectivity's constitution.

Renault rejects the rigid dichotomy between French and German philosophies of recognition, emphasizing that the sources of French theory were German authors such as Hegel, Marx, and Heidegger (Renault 2021). At the same time, German theory also references French authors. Moreover, the thematic division of recognition as struggle in the German discourse and recognition as reciprocity in the French discourse is called into question. This division characterizes recognition theory when using key texts by Honneth, Caillé, and Ricœur as the basis for classification. Indeed, Renault highlights that the concept of recognition gains its meaning through mutual influence and cultural transfer between French and German thought. Adopting Renault's approach, which views French and German recognition theories as unified, it is necessary to note that beyond the national dimension, there is also a conceptual dimension. The key conceptual distinction in recognition theory lies between "continental" and pragmatic approaches. "Continental" recognition theory (encompassing German, French, and "French Theory" in the U.S.A.) considers recognition as a theory of subjectivity, identity, and power. In contrast, Robert Brandom's pragmatic theory of recognition analyzes the concept in a completely different way. While Renault does not explicitly mention Brandom's pragmatic approach, Brandom's perspective illustrates a normative ethical theory in contrast to "French" critical theory.

In his book (Renault 2004/2019), which reconstructs recognition theory through the experience of injustice, Renault articulates his own concept of recognition in relation to Honneth and

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4 "...l'aliénation du sujet n'est pas sa réification, sa chosification, mais son retrait du monde en tant qu'il implique une désobjectivation, constitutive du sujet comme tel" (Fischbach 2009: 99).

other contemporary critical theorists. He argues that recognition, as it relates to misrecognition and injustice, is initially analyzed through emotions and feelings. However, this aspect of recognition analysis contrasts with a logical analysis oriented toward universalization, which contradicts subjective experience. If the ontological foundation of recognition is individuality, which "is intersubjectively constituted" (Renault 2019: 26), then the necessary component of an ethical theory of recognition is "an ensemble of fundamental normative expectations" (Renault 2019: 19). The concept of recognition thus comprises two elements: (1) recognition or misrecognition of different values, and (2) fundamental normative expectations. The unity of these elements ensures the functioning of a critical theory of recognition that ultimately leads to normative theory. The aim of Renault's book is to address the issue of cultural recognition through normative principles. In Renault's view, critical theory cannot avoid normative development, as it is oriented only toward local struggles, which must be redirected into a global struggle. This is why Renault critiques critical theory that excludes normative content.

Brandom develops the concept of recognition through normative ethics. The contrast between the normative ethics of recognition and the critical theory of recognition allows for highlighting the limitations of the concept of recognition as an ethical notion, as opposed to social or political action, and raises the question of the possibilities and boundaries of recognition theory in these two forms. It is precisely the practical aspect of such a philosophical foundation that helps to explain effective strategies for implementing recognition policies. In Brandom's case, recognition as a normative stance is the source of assigning rights to all beings who meet this criterion:

> "... recognition is a *normative* attitude. To recognize someone is to take her to be the subject of normative statuses, that is, of commitments and entitlements, as capable of undertaking responsibilities and exercising authority. This is what it means to say that as reciprocally recognized and recognizing, the creatures in question are *geistig*, spiritual, beings, and no longer merely natural ones" (Brandom 2007: 136).

In contrast to Brandom's position, Kojève asserts that the struggle for recognition is only initiated by those who are willing to risk their lives for it.

A limitation of Brandom's theory lies in his view of a community of individuals who mutually recognize one another as bearers of norms (such as honesty in logical argumentation, as for K.-O. Apel).

However, in contrast to such an unattainable normativity, representatives of critical theory of recognition point out that some vulnerable groups cannot become full members of this community of mutually recognized individuals, either because rights do not extend to minority groups, or because the majority of people do not consider minorities equal to themselves. In other words, normative theory assumes relationships between individuals (in the form of a universal rational system), whereas critical theory responds to the impossibility of recognizing such individuals as subjects of rights within such a system. Normative theory remains within the bounds set by some members of society for others. Here, we encounter the problem of the universalism of morality (e.g., in ideas of cosmopolitanism, etc.).

Another limitation of the normative theory of recognition is the psychological component. According to Matthias Iser, the normative component of recognition is inseparable from the psychological acceptance of a person by another or self-acceptance (Iser 2019). In critical theories of recognition, emphasis is also placed on the psychological aspect (even Hegel's ontological structure of recognition is based on the structure of the subject's self-consciousness — the I and the We).

"We" as a Collective Subject of Critique

The question of the transformation of critical theory in the post-Foucauldian perspective is raised by Lorenzini and Tazzioli. The authors argue that "Critique and the production of subjectivity and new political spaces should be thought *together*" (Lorenzini & Tazzioli 2020: 30). I share this approach, as it highlights how both individual development and collective forms of subjectivity function reciprocally in social transformation. Foucault demonstrated the unity of subjectivity, truth, and power, with critique being a positive moment of transformation in this relation. Contemporary recognition theory allows us to articulate critique within the context of the unity of the production of subjectivity and political spaces. The Hegelian-Kojèvian, or subjectivist interpretation of recognition, offers a reading of the constitution of identity within political spaces. This modern perspective on recognition has been developed by Honneth and Butler, who furthered the Foucauldian-Althusserian theory of power and ideology.

As Lorenzini and Tazzioli point out, authors such as Foucault and Butler "are helpful precisely because they insist on the need to constantly reconceive of critique in the light of specific configurations of

power relations, new modes of subjection and, we contend, different *subjects of critique*" (Lorenzini & Tazzioli 2020: 35). I believe that examining this issue of collective subjects through the lens of recognition theory will enrich the analysis of critical theory.

The "We" is the result of the constitution of a collective subject, which requires constant rethinking. This rethought critique of collective subjects is "*doubly immanent*, since it also strives to problematise its own position with respect to the subjects of critique", the main subject of which is "the (re)production of racialised mechanisms of capture and the asymmetry of lives" (Lorenzini & Tazzioli 2020: 35). From this repertoire of contemporary critical theory as the critique of collective subjects, or We-critique, a toolkit is created for analysing the intersubjective processes of the struggle for recognition. Ontologically, recognition theory is rooted in the dialectic of subjectivities that form the social "We", or, in Hegel's words, "…Spirit is — this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: 'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (Hegel 2013: 110).

However, Foucault ignored the issue of social recognition as intersubjective interaction, focusing instead on self-subjectivation. Starting with Butler, through the concept of subjectivation, that is, subjugation, there is a return to the struggle for recognition as a modern form of subjectivation, and Foucault's theory of power becomes integrated into contemporary recognition theory. As Butler notes, "In Foucault's account of self-constitution, a question that emerges centrally in his work of the 1980s, a regime of truth offers the terms that make self-recognition possible" (Butler 2009b: 22). Thus, the focus of the critical transformation of recognition theory through the lens of Foucault's theory of power is to demonstrate that the struggle for recognition and the process of recognition are forms of subjectivation.

The thesis that can be demonstrated through the theory of recognition as critical theory is as follows: the normative component of critical theory is limited by epistemological frameworks (the question of truth, the ethics of judgment, the regime of truth, etc.), and consequently, critical theory remains radically opposed to normative ethical theory. In the arguments of Lorenzini and Brandom on the normativity of recognition, we find an analysis of language and speech acts, truth (Brandom 2019), perlocution, and illocution (Lorenzini 2023). A shared concept in Butler's and Lorenzini's analysis is the definition of subjectivation through the regime of truth. But despite the shared argument about the subject's determination by a regime of truth — within which the subject becomes a subject — the approaches of Butler and

Lorenzini differ. Butler points to the ontological structure of recognition, which is preceded by the frames of recognizability (Butler 2009a).

This line of reasoning refers back to Foucault's method, where he consistently demonstrated the historical a priori of any given phenomenon. Recognizability, from Butler's perspective, represents the frames within which the recognition or misrecognition of subjects takes place. These frames of recognizability are akin to Foucault's regime of truth. In Lorenzini's work, both in the analysis of subjectivation as a regime of truth and in the analysis of recognition within the structure of speech acts, the problem of establishing truth through language comes to the forefront. I wish to emphasize that although Butler and Lorenzini, as followers of Foucault's critical theory, construct arguments about the political consequences of subjectivation and recognition, Lorenzini's approach is marked by an epistemological analysis of truth and the structure of speech acts.

This reveals a convergence of arguments between Brandom and Lorenzini, which can be described as epistemological. In any case, in the work of Butler, Brandom, and Lorenzini, the argument about the normative content of recognition theory is revealed through the analysis of epistemic phenomena, whether it be the regime of truth, speech acts, or the ethics of judgment. From this, one may conclude that in order to define normativity in these theories, the authors inevitably arrive at its core in the form of logic and language. It is precisely epistemic concepts (truth, language, judgment) that enable the use of logical arguments in relation to the critical theory of the subject and recognition. Such argumentation may be characterized as the epistemological framework of recognition theory.

In contrast, critical theory that aims at rethinking norms and the regime of truth (or the frames of recognizability, in Butler's terms) places emphasis not on epistemic phenomena but on the ontological political and social conditions of subject formation. Whereas normative ethical theory prescribes how a subject should act, critical theory — even while maintaining a normative component — asks what compels the subject to act in one way or another. Consequently, the critique of the conditions of possibility for knowledge, recognition and misrecognition, and subjectivation remains opposed to normative theories in the traditional sense of the term, such as virtue ethics. What is referred to as the "normative component" of critical theory is limited by epistemological frameworks and is directed toward the subsequent critical work of transforming the world — despite the seemingly power-independent nature of logical truth, and the objectivity of logic and language. This is how Lorenzini speaks about the critical potential of Foucauldian genealogy:

"This we-making dimension is also what gives genealogy its specific normative force: even though Foucault's genealogies do not tell us precisely "what is to be done," they nevertheless commit us to carrying on, in one form or another, the (collective) struggle against the subjugating effects of the governmental mechanisms and regimes of truth that still permeate our lives" (Lorenzini 2023: 124).

Even though Butler draws on the Foucauldian idea that "critique is a virtue" (Butler, 2001) and speaks of the impossibility of productively opposing critique to norm in the polemics between Foucauldians and Habermasians, the opposition between critical theory and normative theory persists in an ethical sense. Critical recognition theory views the continuous critique of established norms as a way of rethinking the frames of recognizability of subjects.

The central philosophical question of recognition theory, as one of the most developed and widespread themes of critical theory (in decolonial, feminist studies, as well as in studies of national identity, political communities, legal subjects, etc., lies in the forms of disobedience of subjects[5]), is the question of the subject, whose subjectivation is formed through recognition by the "We" or the Other, as well as the critical reflection on this recognition or misrecognition. The concept of critique in Foucault characterizes the strategy of subjective practice of constituting oneself as a subject through disobedience, that is, struggle: "Critique is the art of voluntary insubordination, of considered indocility. Critique essentially performs the function of desubjectification in the play of what might, in a word, be called the politics of truth" (Foucault 2024: 26).

Thus, recognition theory demonstrates not only the necessity of the normative justification of critical theory but also the need for the ongoing constitution of critique in relation to the normative characteristics of subjects.

Conclusion: Critique of Normativity

Despite contemporary research asserting the normative character of critical theory, or at least the convergence of critical theory with

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5   For example, studies of recognition in the decolonial approach: Dussel, E. (2022), Maesschalck, M. (2016), Mignolo, W. D., & Tlostanova, M. V. (2006). See also the volume on various social aspects of recognition and the intersection of Miranda Fricker's theory of epistemic injustice with recognition theory: Giladi, P., & McMillan, N. (2022).

normative theory (Honneth, Butler, Lorenzini, Renault, and others), the thesis of this paper argues that the normativity of critical theory is limited in its relationship to critique. The key concept used here is recognition, which lies at the heart of various critical reflections on decoloniality, justice, and related topics. By considering recognition theory as a critical theory with the concept of recognition as its central subject, this paper explains the critical aspect of this theory and the attempts to bring critical theory of recognition closer to normative theory. Relying on the works of Lorenzini and Brandom, the paper clarifies the normative content of recognition theory within epistemological frameworks. However, it asserts that beyond the epistemological problematics, recognition theory remains critical, constantly questioning any form of normativity.

Critical theory highlights that the normative ideal remains unattainable in situations of injustice. Nonetheless, normativity, or the normative force (Lorenzini 2023), can be seen as a guiding principle of critical theory. Undoubtedly, we encounter a contradiction: if the subject is never fully constituted, and is always in the process of constitution, such normative force can be viewed by some critical theorists not as a commitment to recognition but as subjection and domination of individuals.

The main conclusion is that, as a theory aimed at justifying universal rights and norms, critical theory reveals its normative content. However, when the theory remains at the level of analysing the process of subjugation and resistance through the struggle for recognition or subjectivation, critical theory may call into question the norms that ground the constitution of the subject.

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