

Since time immemorial, from the very emergence of humans on the planet we have passed a huge evolutionary road on our way to understanding who we are, where we live, what an inexplicable world surrounds us. Anyhow humans have always made attempts to explain the reality and correlate the objectively existing phenomena and processes with their own abilities and knowledge they possessed at this or that particular stage of development. Thus, the progress we witness nowadays was stimulated by the lack of awareness and a chain of constantly arising questions which required finding answers.

The process of investigating the human nature and overall gist of the universe has invariably been marked by controversies, disputes and ambiguities in the results gained. Different, sometimes even discrepant interpretations of a certain notion gave a vast field for contemplations and diverse viewpoints to exist. Here it is relevant to mention the saying that thought thrives on conflict. Indeed, the variety of approaches to viewing some issues formed the grounds for new directions of research, study and theories to appear.

The world has been the object in the study of which two dissonant standpoints came into clash – idealistic and materialistic. The core basis for the supporters of the idealism is an ‘idea’ as an inception of ‘physical’ reality. The materialism adherents claim that first was the physical world and only then appeared a human being as a source of generating ‘idea’. So, unlike materialists (Epicurus, Leibniz, Marks, Engels, Boyle) idealists (Plotinus, Plato, Hegel) asserted and insisted on abstract and independently existing ‘mind’ and mental processes without reference to the outer material environment. In addition, they emphasized the primacy of mind, conscience and psyche over substance and nature where the latter are allegedly secondary and derived and conditioned by the first.

The world community didn’t stand still. Diverse norms, laws, regulations have been developed to organize life of each society. Law abidance was and is still considered to be the basis of right behavior. So, a fair question arises how could for a long period of time slavery, enthrallment, neglect and disregard of rights exist? With the hindsight we may claim that at those times the states with elaborate systems of legal codes and normative acts have been established but what they really stood for and what rights and freedoms they declared and guaranteed?

As a matter of fact, here it is reasonable to speculate about the very notion of a norm and what the ground of its creation and existence is. A norm presupposes a required standard and some pattern of behavior to be complied with and reached. Hence we talk about social conduct the type of which is expected. For instance, the slaveholding system was adopted and accepted as a ‘norm’ of social life. Thus, in the past a person was a slave and viewed as legal property of another person and couldn’t but obey the owner. However, in a moral sense it was totally not a ‘norm’ since it deeply contradicted an individual’s rights for self-esteem and self-realization. The involuntary submission embodied that system of relations between social groups which sharply demarcated the strata of privileged status and those devoid of any rights.

The inner discontent of humiliated masses provoked their remonstrance against the type of community they lived in. In this connection the movements aimed to eradicate injustice and slavery started to develop. One of such protests was the abolitionism which continued for several centuries (16th, 17th, 18th). Its representatives had been striving to cease the unjust human labor exploitation and provide the disrespected groups with their freedoms and rights.

Thereby, a long-term struggle for acknowledgement and justice became a thorny issue for discussions and laid the foundations for numerous researches in this field on the way to establish the idea of equality and recognition.

The edge of 19th-20th centuries saw another example of human fight for recognition. The movement of suffragettism manifests women's collaborative attempts to gain their place in social life equally with men. This movement came to denote the demand for giving women the right to vote.

On the whole we deal with the acute problem of discrimination itself. The term concerns biased and prejudiced attitude to particular social groups. It comprises the issue of social exclusion when representatives of certain groups become devoid of the rights and to some extent humiliation of their potentialities. But nowadays humanistic policy that advocates equality is called to view each individual regardless of race, gender, religion, social status etc. Thus, it is sufficient to emphasize the notion of morality – principles which refer to the differentiation between right and wrong, good or bad behavior. Therefore it is the system of values and virtues to follow such as morality of individual principles and conscience, morality of self-accepted moral principles, social-order-maintaining morality etc.

Indeed, such ethical statutes are sound and draw the picture of common sense reality. However, it may be paradoxical but common sense is not so common. The norms are more often preached rather than practiced and the evasion from the prescribed ethical code inflicts the inevitable danger of social discrepancy. Up to a point, far not all members of society are adequately treated and recognized. Some clusters of people feel overboard and undergo the disdain of others. Nowadays representatives of philosophical schools don't nonchalantly stand apart from the problem. They try to undertake efforts and get more profound insight into ethical concerns.

One of the outstanding contemporary philosophers who developed the theory of recognition is Axel Honneth who works at the University of Frankfurt. His attention is directed to and concentrated on understanding relations in society with reference to the factors of respect, acknowledgement and power. The focal point of this comprehension is the emphasis on intersubjectivity as a decisive aspect in recognition process.

He underlines non-acknowledgement as destroying and segregating power to be the reason of conflicts between societal members. Honeth critically reexamined and reconsidered other theoretical achievements in the area of social and political philosophy in attempts to elucidate the moral issues of disregard and misrecognition. According to his viewpoint contemporary society is characterized by pathological markers that brightly represent societal discrepancy.

Topical questions that are discussed in his critical theory are aimed at revealing the nature of social critique in our reality. Virtually, the author analyzes and scrutinizes the grounds of morale and social recognition. His considerations are built around the search of solutions to the social collision.

Furthermore, he believes that community doesn't exist irrespectively of each of its members and opposes the external vision of social arrangement to the internal alternative which he thinks to be the pattern. Thus, the philosopher indicates that each individual with his or her own aspiration to self-acceptance should be taken as a reasonable and prudent foundation of social system and relations between its members. By addressing the ethical aspect as the embedded and indispensable element in constructing sound community A. Honneth demonstrates the scheme when every social constituent

will be endowed with equal right to deserve and reach recognition with regard to their aptitudes, capabilities and attainments what will to a large extent enhance their self-esteem and confidence.

The attempt to find the ground for social critique barely on the basis of a person's self-esteem would be scarce and not convincing enough as well. Therefore, the philosopher suggests the internal in contrast to the external ethics of life. With the aim to better understand the difference it would be relevant to make clear what the notion of ethics generally is.

The established and accepted ethical and moral prescriptions are called to regulate the life of communities. Ethics comprises the rules and principals of morale and thus determines good or bad behavior. Ethics represents and explicates the fundamentals of virtues people should stick to, that are beneficial not only to a person but the society in general. These universal basics include the duties and responsibilities of the family members and the elements of social medium.

Ethics is enclosed as a separate branch into the philosophical approach to world comprehension. This area of knowledge is subdivided into several sections each giving more detailed scrutiny of the ethical concerns.

The metaethics is concentrated on describing and clarifying the cause-effects and interrelated processes. It searches the answers to the questions of the sources of ethical principals and their essence. The behavioral norms and their practical implementation and also the aftereffects that are envisaged are revealed in the normative ethics. The disputable and ambiguous problems are in the realm of applied ethics.

In fact, a large scope of conflicting and equivocal things such as suicide, war, sexual orientation, global warming etc. becomes the focus of attention of all three subgroups of ethics since they are in close relation and connection with each other. The first subgroup explains the origin of this or that notion that is 'where is it from?', 'what is it?' The second one provides the instrumental help in fitting certain norms and principles to the situation - 'what is valid and what is not' as for example the issue of discrimination rises the norms that determine the rights of minorities. The third one virtually presents the notion as the object marked by contradictory standpoints that is why it can't do without first and second. Thus, ethics forms boundaries and criteria of right conduct. Hence, violation of rules can be detected and revealed on the grounds of the existing restrictions and the act of 'crossing the line' presupposes censure and probable punishment.

The above mentioned postulates of ethics Honneth relates to the external societal critique which in his opinion functions irrespectively of the incompatible and discordant social phenomena which he calls 'pathologies'. He lays a proof to support his idea of the existing pathology by mentioning the internal criteria of critique which presuppose internal leverage of moral and normative control in community rather than regulations accepted by the society and adhered by all its members alone. Indeed, the philosopher's approach underlines that the external norms are not comprehensive on which to ground the criteria of social censure or justification. The author makes efforts to represent much more "convincing justification of our ethical judgments concerning the necessary requirements of a good and well-lived life" (pg 41).

Honneth's Critical Theory highlights the preconditions of a person's recognition. Thus, he states, that the significant and foremost undeniable premise for an individual to express his or her own personality by communication is first of all the recognition in social community. He also emphasizes that all forms of social deprecation and disapproval are not stipulated by the ethical code and

provoked by its violation. Rather, he stresses the key role of each individual's inner instinctive feeling of justice and when it's exposed to infringement they experience the deprivation of their rights and freedoms. In such a way they are turned down on endowing and possessing recognition what entails their discontent and opposition aggravated by the offended feelings.

All in all, the road of seeking answers to the questions which are indispensably connected with the organization of human life seems to be endless. It is always difficult to come at the truth. Still, the philosophy called to explain and shed light to the dark areas of people's existence used to and up to nowadays reality continues to delve into other branches of philosophical world cognition such as the social, political, moral and other branches of philosophical knowledge. The acquisitions and achievements of theorists in these spheres are accumulated, reconsidered under various perspectives and serve as precondition grounds of further starvations to make a theory more full-scale and exhausting. Alex Honneth's contribution into the study of moral and ethical concerns deserves much appreciation, since it deepened and therefore more thoroughly revealed the fundamentals of differentiation between 'good' and 'bad' and providing new standpoint of the social mechanisms of understanding and application of moral guidelines. Moreover, the author got an insight into the true nature of human and social regulatory tools which assist in our better comprehension of what recognition presupposition is and what its role in the sound community we desire to live in.

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