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A Sociocultural Approach to Recognition and Learning

Summary

This is a case study of goldsmith craft apprenticeship learning and recognition. The study includes 13 participants in a goldsmith's workshop. The theoretical approach to recognition and learning is inspired by sociocultural theory. In this article recognition is defined with reference to Hegel's understanding of the concept as a transformed struggle of granting acknowledgement to another person plus receiving acknowledgement as a person. It is argued that the notion of recognition can enhance sociocultural notions of learning. In analysing the case study of apprenticeship learning, the article suggests that recognition is expressed in the act of participants staking their lives to prove their autonomy, in work activity in terms of the role of artefacts and in the form of abstract and concrete recognition. Finally recognition is discussed in relation to learning and development. The study concludes that recognition is an important category not only to explain apprenticeship learning but also to give a sociocultural explanation of learning in general.

1 Introduction

Recognition ("Anerkennung" in German) refers briefly speaking to an act of granting acknowledgement to another person plus receiving acknowledgement as a person. This paper couples recognition with learning and development.

Learning and development – becoming someone through participating in cultural his-

torical activity – can be seen as cultural development towards self-mastery (Vygotsky, 1998: 171). According to Vygotsky this mastery was built on the notion of consciousness as mediated and on the idea that the person must "carry out activities that force him to rise above himself" (Vygotsky, 1987: 213). While this notion of mastery, as argued later, can be seen in connection with recognition, sociocultural approaches to learning have generally not paid great attention to Hegel's notion of recognition.

Packer and Goicoechea (2000) present the only sociocultural theory that explicitly links learning, personality development and recognition. Packer and Goicoechea suggest a model where the person is constructed in a social context shaped through practical activity and formed in relationships of desire and recognition. These relationships can also serve to split or alienate the person thus motivating a construction of identity interwoven with the person's place and participation in the social world (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 53). This means that identity change or person formation can be conceived with recourse to a struggle for recognition.

When pondering how we achieve mastery of self (including the process of mastery of self mediated by others as well as cultural tools) this

article will suggest that we must look for struggles for recognition since this struggle goes before personality development. The article argues that recognition is an important concept for sociocultural approaches to learning in general and apprenticeship learning in particular. The hypothesis is that learning should be conceived in terms of intersubjectively and institutionally mediated recognition.

This article reports a case study of Danish goldsmith craft apprenticeship learning¹. The case was apprenticeship learning at Bent Exner's goldsmith workshop. Bent Exner was, as elaborated later, a well-known artisan who lives in Northern Jutland, Denmark. The case study investigates how apprentices, journeywomen and the master appeal to each other and struggle to grant and receive recognition from each other. The participants of the case study were: Bent Exner (the master) and 12 former apprentices (seven females and five males). This sample made up for all apprentices (except one male who had emigrated) who had graduated from the master's workshop.

2 Recognition and learning

This section will introduce Hegel's notion of recognition. Then a sociocultural approach to learning and recognition will be discussed.

Hegel's notion of recognition

Hegel explicated his account of recognition in several unpublished and published works during his lifetime. However, this article will concentrate mainly on Hegel's account of

recognition in the "Phenomenology of Spirit" from 1807 (Hegel, 1977) with a brief detour to the "Philosophy of Right" from 1820/1821 (Hegel, 1991). Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* initially (sections I-III) traces how an observer has desires that provide him with certainty that he is neither a passive observer of the world nor an observer of his representations about the world, but in fact an agent or self situated in the world (as argued in section IV of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*). But this certainty of self leads to a clash between two agents; not so much in terms of a struggle over desires where one agent tries to make the other agent a tool to satisfy his desire, but rather as a struggle to ensure self-determination or self-autonomy. Each agent wants to prove that he is an autonomous person, who independently determines which relations to the world (including his desires) to take as legitimate. This causes the agent to engage in a life-and-death struggle – a primordial fight not only to seek the death of the other, but also to prove the agent's willingness to give up his life.

This struggle is resolved in the transformation or sublation² of the agents' desires and the resulting formation of self-consciousness as the agents mutually recognise each other. Self-consciousness emerges due to the need for self-recognition that is not met by merely devouring objects (e.g. food or selves as in the life-and-death struggle mentioned above). The agent's desire turns out not to be merely directed towards objects, but towards the other. The other self, who cannot be killed or devoured if it is to be a self, performs its acknowledging act of the agent's self. The resolution of this dilemma is expressed in the double-relation of a) respecting or acknowledging the autonomous status of an other person and b) of being

1 In Denmark goldsmith craft training is part of the vocational educational system governed by the Ministry of Education and enacted by the Danish Goldsmith College, which is part of Copenhagen Technical School. Danish vocational education is a dual educational system interchanging between school and workshop periods. Periods spent working in the workshop comprise the bulk of the 4 years of training; thus apprenticeship learning is an important aspect of goldsmith vocational educational training.

2 The term in German "Aufhebung" means to cancel and preserve at the same time by integrating and arriving at a new totality.

respected or acknowledged as such a person in return.

Hegel (1977: 111) explicitly stated that mutual recognition was a necessary condition for the formation of self-consciousness since it only exists by being recognised by another and in return recognising this other person. The course of the person's struggle to be taken for an autonomous agent is represented in the institution of mastery-slavery that represents the most rudimentary or primitive form of recognition. The formation of self-consciousness surpasses the institution of mastery-slavery (and the master-slave relation) in two ways. First, once we move beyond it, participants become somebody to each other and not mere objects of someone's desire (O'Neill, 1996). Second, Hegel (1991: §35) distinguishes between abstract and concrete personality. Recognition on one level mediates abstract personality understood as the formation of the person as endowed with rights on a legal level. But recognition also mediates concrete personality expressed through acts of love and friendship (Williams, 1992: 183). In friendship and love, the individual wins her concrete personality by giving up her abstract personality.

While Hegel's (1977) notion of recognition is situated in the intersubjective bonds between two agents, recognition is also expressed in more developed social practices where communal agents struggle to grant or receive recognition. Thus sections V-VII in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* point to more advanced stages of recognition than the master-slave relation, e.g. between divine law (Hegel exemplifies this with reference to Sophocles' *Antigone*) versus human law (exemplified by Creon), where the family becomes both a natural and social institution in which recognition of its members can take place. To be more systematic, these wider connotations of recognition encompass three social spheres: family, civil society and state (Hegel, 1991). Thus recognition is both intersubjectively me-

diated and extends beyond the dyadic relation between two agents. It can be hypothesised that recognition is both formally granted and something that the subject (apprentice, learner, woman, man etc.) has to fight for in terms of an intersubjective struggle mediated or rather transformed within the above-mentioned levels (family, civil society and state).

Recognition and learning

This section will introduce Packer and Goicoechea's (2000) use of a particular notion of recognition that relies upon Kojève³. This article argues for the use of Hegel's notion of recognition since it is more convincing than Kojève's. As mentioned in the introduction, Packer and Goicoechea (2000) propose a model of learning where desire and recognition are key elements. This understanding largely derives from Kojève's (1969) interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, 1977). In short, Kojève (1969: 40) conceives of recognition merely in terms of a desire to be desired, where a person depends upon another person for being confirmed as desirable. According to this view, the other (person) is conceived as a greedy emptiness. But the problem with Kojève's (1969: 40) reading of recognition is that it downplays Hegel's emphasis on mutual recognition and the sociality of becoming a person. More specifically, Kojève's interpretation of recognition as desire to be desired and the idea that humans are voids desiring to be fulfilled ignores Hegel's (1977; 1991) push towards communal forms of life for instance recognition expressed as trust in the family⁴.

3 Alexander Kojève's (1902-1968) influential lectures on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in the 1930's were either directly attended by – or at had a huge influence over – prominent thinkers like Merleau-Ponty, Jean Paul Sartre, Jacques Lacan, Andre Breton, Georges Bataille, and Alexandre Koyre.

4 To be more precise there are two fundamental problems with Kojève's reading of Hegel's notion of recognition. First, Kojève can be criticised for an anthropological

For these reasons Packer and Goicoechea's reliance upon Kojève's conception of recognition is problematic since it gives a limited view of the relationship between learning and recognition as is evident in the examples Packer and Goicoechea (2000) give of recognition. They cite Felman (1987: 86; cited in Packer and Goicoechea, 2000: 236) who points out that teaching includes an emotional or erotic component. They also cite Schoenfeld (1999: 13; cited in Packer and Goicoechea, 2000: 236) who points out that the teacher faces the task of "seducing" students. Finally, Packer and Goicoechea (2000: 238) cite Vygotsky's (1997a: 348) statement that the social forces in the individual represent "*a bitter struggle, now concealed, now explicit, between teacher and student.*" While it is true that for Vygotsky (1997a: 349) the good teacher was not objective and sober-minded, but passionate in an "*atmosphere of tense social struggle*", these citations do not refer to the importance of erotic desire in teaching, as Packer and Goicoechea imply. Vygotsky (1997a: 346f) explicitly dismisses the view that the teacher must seduce or attract the person to be educated in order for any imitation and learning to take place, since education was more than imitation. It follows that it is problematic to draw on notions of seduction in conceiving of recognition and learning with reference to Vygotsky.

In other words, Packer and Goicoechea (2000) raise a valid point about learning being

related to relationships of struggles and love. But it is problematic to read Hegel's point about love and recognition in terms of seduction. Love, according to Hegel, represents a form of recognition that is not contingent or conditioned upon something else as in seduction, where the other becomes a means to satisfy desire, rather than someone to be recognised in his/her own right. In friendship and love, the individual's identity is constructed not only abstractly as a person with rights, but also concretely as a lovable person, as investigated in the following case study of apprenticeship learning.

3 Introduction to the case study

The case was a study of participants in a goldsmith's workshop. The purpose of the study was to investigate how recognition mediates the formation of persons in apprenticeship learning. The participants of the case study were, as mentioned in the introduction, Bent Exner and 12 former apprentices who had graduated from the master's goldsmith workshop over more than the 35 years that he had been active.

The master owned the workshop and he was a well-known goldsmith who had been popularised by the Danish mass media, won several art stipends and exhibited his works at a variety of Danish galleries. In 2003 he was endowed with a yearly art stipend from the Danish State as one of the few Danish artisans ever to have received this. The workshop was economically specialised and it performed only custom works such as jewellery for private customers or altar chalices for churches. As opposed to most other small goldsmith workshops, jewellery repairs were not done in this workshop⁵. There were no strict boundaries

reading of recognition that conceives the master-slave relation literally as human figures (for instance merely in antiquity or feudal rule) rather than within broader historical institutions of mastery versus serfdom (Kelly, 1996). Second as mentioned above, Kojève focuses narrowly on treating the other as a mere object of your desire and the struggle between agents as reconciled in the master and slave relationship. The point is that while Packer and Goicoechea make an important contribution to viewing learning as clashes of desires versus loving relationships, their focus on the master-slave relationship (building on Kojève) is insufficient.

5 The master had run his goldsmith activities from three different sites in the Danish countryside. This will not be discussed in this paper since it has no great relevance

between goldsmith craft, home and family, as symbolised by the fact that the workshop was built in a room adjacent to the private house of the master.

Between one and four people at a time have worked at the workshop in periods with no apprentices. Normally the workshop employed two apprentices (an older and a younger) and no journeywoman, though there have also been prolonged periods where the master employed his own graduated apprentice as a journeywoman instead of taking new apprentices. When I conducted the interviews⁶ (from 2002 to 2004), the workshop had stopped taking new apprentices and it consisted of the master (aged 71 in 2003) and a journeywoman (who, as mentioned, was also a former apprentice).

The former apprentices had all become accomplished goldsmiths, though not all practiced the craft professionally: two had won honours distinctions at graduation (the Silver medal – the highest distinction at Vocational school); two had won design prizes for excellence; two had become teachers within further education; one was a manager of a goldsmith firm; four ran their own workshops, and finally two worked as journeywomen in other distinguished goldsmith workshops.

to the issue of learning and recognition. Whenever this paper quotes an “apprentice”, it technically speaking gives voice to a “former apprentice” describing the experiences and memories of once being an apprentice.

- 6 All participants were individually interviewed once and the interviews were semi structured qualitative interviews lasting from 1 to 1,5 hour. All interviews were conducted by the author and recorded on a mini-disc and then recorded on to a tape. An experienced secretary transcribed the interviews verbatim. The transcribed interviews cover approximately 237 single spaced pages. All participants agreed to participate after informed consent (written and verbal information about the purpose of the study) and did not wish to be anonymous. Anonymity would have prevented the participants from the possibility of arguing against my interpretations, or using their interview statement for promoting personal ends such as promoting their career.

4 To go beyond yourself to become yourself

This section investigates the apprentices’ appropriation of the standards of the workshop. The section will argue that becoming an artisan involved for the apprentices to go beyond themselves and to appropriate the standards of the profession mediated by the master. The section will argue three points:

1. The participants (master, apprentices and journeywomen) had to stake their lives to prove their autonomous status as artisans.
2. In imposing his will on the world, the master used the apprentice as his tool, for instance in the way the apprentice worked for the master by employing artefacts and the master’s methods and goals.
3. This gave rise to a double relationship: a) The apprentice was on the one hand the master’s tool, but, b) on the other hand, since the master was the apprentice’s means to become an artisan, the apprentice was his own master. The apprentice achieved self-mastery by working for the master. In conclusion, the apprentice in fact mediated the master’s relation to the world and achieved self-control by working for the master.

Staking your life and proving your autonomy

Bent Exner: “We drive around to the characteristic places. We do not start out watching jewellery, art, and creativity or hold a lecture, not at all. We go to Råbjerg Mile, Rubjerg Knude [sand hills in Northern Jutland, Denmark] and walk up and down the dune staking our lives. We go to Skarre Klit or Vildmose [a sand dune and a moor in Northern Jutland] to see the monotony.”

All apprentices confirmed in the interviews that the master invited them to perceive natural scenery rather than to engage in lengthy dis-

cussions of art and creativity. This indicates that learning to craft meant not only coming to master technical skills like soldering, cutting etc. gold and silver, but to relate to the world at large. The apprentice went beyond the confines of his or her own perspective through acts like going outside to face danger.

This theme of the artisan staking his or her life was also emphasised by the master in a booklet written for one of his exhibitions:

"It is interesting to distinguish between the professional, ever-experimenting artist, who gives his life to expressing himself – and his fellow humans, who first become creative in and around the home, after work, as compensation for a sometimes trivial job [...] The former exhibits his work. Maybe he wins prizes and becomes famous. The latter keeps [...] to himself and stays at home" (Exner, 1984: 7).

The master construes the artisan as someone who is willing to "give his life" in the activity of crafting. It is only the "everyday person" who stays within his or her own safe confines ("home", "a trivial job"). But obviously the artisan does not automatically receive public recognition ("maybe he wins prizes and becomes famous"), but recognition is contingent upon the artisan going beyond herself to prove her autonomy. This theme of autonomy is elaborated in the following:

Bent Exner: "I craft a thing and they [the customers] do not have to receive it if they do not want it – if it is astray. But I must have the liberty to use my things at my own art exhibitions. Otherwise I become a whore".

Interviewer: "In the sense that you hold back in order to make an exhibition or that you call it back or ask them if you can borrow it for an exhibition?

Bent Exner: "You bet, otherwise I start making what Ms. Smith wants. And I preach to them a little bit about...or how should I put it...tell them about my experiences with jewellery: That jewellery originally was intended solely as gifts to the Gods or to the dead in the graves. It was never intended for use. In fact jewellery cannot

be used. It is a soft metal attracted to soap, dust and dirt. Therefore there are limits as to the use of jewellery."

The quote deals with the master's "sales talk" to customers. The master was engaged in a dialogue with his customers that served to persuade them that he was an autonomous artisan. As opposed to succumbing to the desire of the average private customer ("Ms Smith") the master insisted on his autonomy ("liberty") to decide what to produce. He also insisted on maintaining the rights over the produced artefacts even though they were formally sold. This way the master claimed to have removed capital from the relation between the master and his customers – in order not to become a "whore".

To recapitulate, by telling his customers that he was solely responsible for the craft and symbolically a lifelong owner of the product, the master upheld an image of himself as a free artisan who only produced for himself according to universal standards of the craft and not primarily to satisfy the customers' particular desires.

Artefacts

Interviewer: "If you think back upon your apprenticeship can you describe your daily work chores?"

Trine: "[...] He made a sketch. A very delicate little drawing that you talked a little about and went ahead with. It was not a very precise drawing with measurements; it was more of an impression – in other words an expression – that he sought for. And then you went ahead. It was usually in eighteen-carat gold and very delicate, fine and light things. And then you basically worked on it and perhaps you made a model first and some drawings. Well, you had to specify the drawing a little bit in terms of dealing with the technical and how it all fitted together. Typically, I think that we worked two to three weeks on a jewellery."

The quote shows that the master designed the artefacts by making a sketch on a piece of paper. The sketches were handed to the apprentices who carried out the actual work. It was up to the apprentices to interpret the master's intentions in order to determine the thickness of the ring, the number of places that the jewellery had been soldered etc. In other words, the apprentice could not create out of his own fancy, but followed the master's intentions with the goldsmith artefacts.

But the sketches also acted as communication tools. The master would normally not have to explain in any greater detail to the senior apprentice (who had been in the workshop at least one year) how the sketches should be interpreted, but with the junior apprentice he would often have a short conversation about how to interpret the sketches. In order to interpret the master's intentions and craft the artefacts, the apprentice had to engage in dialogue with the master about the artistic expression of the workshop. By engaging with the sketches as well as the dialogues with the master over artistic expression, the apprentice was in a sense led to become "an other" than what she was.

Here externalisation refers to a transformation from one level of subjectivity to another level, the intersubjective. The term should be used as a metaphor for agency rather than a dualistic notion of inner worlds being transformed into outer or vice versa. The point is that the apprentice worked not out of her own particular desires, but went beyond herself. The master became an other – he lost himself so to speak – when his designs were externalised and taken over by the apprentice. In this process the apprentice was transformed (sublated) in the sense that she became someone (a recognised person – not just anybody) to the master through whom he could experience his own self (his desires, plans etc.) – a tool and somebody in her own right. The master regained self-certainty – that he was in fact an autonomous person – when the apprentice

was recognised concretely by the master not only as a tool, but another autonomous person who worked not to satisfy her own desire. The result was that by working for the master (working from the master's sketches within a historical craft tradition embodied in a community of practice), the apprentice was appropriating an impersonal attitude to the world.

But this act of externalisation could only be performed to the extent that the master could prove himself right to the apprentice, for instance as a role model or by demonstrating not only his skills but also his moral worth as a craftsman. The master did this by expressing the high ideals of the workshop. In sum, in working for the master and in using his sketches, the apprentice satisfied the master's desire and externalised the master's intentions. Externalisation thus referred to the process of confrontation with another, cancellation of yourself and cancellation of other in the process of going beyond yourself, i.e. personality development or person formation.

These notions of desire, cancellation and externalisation are not lofty speech metaphors; they are relevant to underpin the process of becoming a craft person through struggles for recognition. This process was expressed for instance in the fact that it was the master who was recognised publicly in terms of all finished objects (jewellery etc.). This was seen in two ways:

1. All goldsmith works (artefacts) put on display or sold by Exner were represented and categorised as his work. During the interviews, when time permitted it, I gave the former apprentice one of Exner's (1984) books on his works, and asked the participants to comment on the jewellery. Basically all apprentices recognised several works that they had done, but they never claimed ownership over the jewellery, just a sense of pride that they had produced it.

2. Bent Exner was, like other Danish goldsmiths who were chartered by the Danish goldsmith association, granted the right to mark his craftwork. Marking means to put your name/initials on all artefacts leaving the workshop. The fact that the master marked his name on the artefacts that were sold to private persons or shown at art exhibitions symbolises that only the master – not the apprentice – had the right of ownership over the jewellery.

To rephrase the point: As a property-owning craftsman Exner marked all produced goods in his workshop and thus received public recognition from everything produced. The master saw his will imposed on the world mediated by the apprentices (as discussed above in terms of sketches). And the apprentices mediated the master's relation to the world since they satisfied the master's desires and thus also mediated the master's relation to himself. The master's impersonal point of view in the master-apprentice relation led to a form of mastery on behalf of the apprentice. This gave rise to a double relationship: The apprentice was the master's tool, but since the master was the apprentice's means to become an artisan, the apprentice was his own master. In other words, the apprentice achieved self-control by working for the master.

Mastery meant both to be a technically skilled craftsman, but also to master the craft and your self. Through this type of mastery the master mediated the apprentices' relation to themselves by making them masters themselves (letting them work hard for him and hereby work for themselves, of letting the apprentices appropriate his norms). Mastery was appropriated by the apprentices as a norm or more importantly as a tool of learning to control your self. But it was also externalised as a technically skilled artisan and as a way of behaving responsibly towards the workshop.

Through externalisation, the apprentice was

recognised by the master not only as someone who carried out the master's plans, but more importantly as someone who worked not to satisfy his own desire. By working for the master, the apprentice appropriated an impersonal attitude on the world. This (externalisation) could only be performed to the extent that the master could prove himself right to the apprentice for instance by being a role model. In this sense the master's (personal) leading motive was the (collective) leading motive of the workshop community engaged in crafting activity.

5 Abstract and concrete recognition

As mentioned in the beginning, Hegel makes a distinction between recognition of somebody's concrete personality versus abstract personality. This was a distinction between concretely recognising a person through love and friendship (e.g. within the family) versus abstractly recognising the person's legal rights (within civil society).

Abstract recognition

How were the participants recognised abstractly as persons? According to Hegel the notion of legal rights is based on the fact that the person is a property owner. But if it was only the master who was owner of the workshop how did abstract recognition play a role? First as Danish citizens the apprentices were granted civil rights or abstract recognition like any other Danish citizen. Second the apprentices were under the law of apprenticeship⁷. The following example is about wage:

7 The contemporary version of this law ("Bekendtgørelse af lov om erhvervsuddannelser" number 183 of 22nd March 2004) grants the apprentice certain rights like a 3 months' trial period and a wage (which amounts at least to a minimum wage) paid by the workshop as specified in the apprentice's apprenticeship agreement.

Bent Exner: "And I give her [the journeywoman] a higher wage than I get. I would not dream of doing it otherwise. After all, it is not her workshop, so she does not have the pleasure that I have. So she must earn more. She earns as much as a school principal. [...] Because the human being is still present in me together with the honour of my profession and the honour of my own place. Here the jewellery must be in order, the ethics must be in order and we must have a good time, in order to be happy for life. Not that we sit around laughing".

The quote illustrates the sense of honour that the master felt for his place and that he aimed to install in his apprentices and journeywomen. But the quote also illustrates that the master economically compensated his journeywoman since she did not own the workshop and therefore could not assert her abstract right as a workshop owner. As mentioned earlier (in the section on artefacts) only the workshop owner had the right to mark his works and this was a significant action in craftwork that was imbued with recognition. While the apprentices could not take possession of the works produced in the workshop they said that the master's name and reputation could be used to "open doors" in the craft world. In this sense the apprentices could use the master's/workshop's name as a strategy to seize upon recognition.

The above quote leaves open what the master means by having a good time, but the quote suggests that it entails more than receiving a good wage, but also an enjoyment of working, though never at the expense of hard, earnest work ("not that we sit [idly] around laughing"). The next section will look at issue of concrete recognition and the significance of friendship between master and apprentice to learning.

Concrete recognition

In Hegel, love is an example of mutual recognition and it assumes an unconditional relationship between two persons based on mutuality, where the giver is also the receiver and

vice versa. Love is normally associated with the family, for instance between husband and wife or parent and children, but can also encompass friendship.

Apprenticeship learning at Exner's workshop exhibited many features of recognition that entailed relations of friendship and love. This included life long bonds – stretching several decades – between former apprentices and master. For instance, when the master celebrated his 70th birthday a few years ago all former apprentices showed up except for two who were ill: "*There was no problem [in the apprentices showing up] because we have a fellowship of the heart*" (the master). The master was rightly proud that after up to 35 years his former apprentices were still willing to travel up to his workshop in Northern Jutland and celebrate his birthday.

Thus being an apprentice in Exner's workshop entailed being part of the family, including privileges like dining with the family and duties like helping out with the basic needs, cleaning, changing nappies on the kids etc.: there was no sharp separation between producing artefacts and participating in the family.

Also, the apprentices were engaged in various boundary-crossing activities: "*We would go hunting, also in the middle of the working day, when time permitted it*" (the master). The apprentices confirmed how they together with the master and journeywoman had worked jointly for instance to set up art exhibitions but also about recreational activities such as going to the beach in the summer, going hunting in autumn, ice-skating or sweating in the sauna in winter etc.

In short, the apprentice generally experienced being part of the family and this was significant because as a member of the workshop/family you were treated with respect and your actions did not conjure up humiliation (as could for instance be involved in carrying out menial tasks like emptying dustbins or cleaning toilets) since the apprentice did not do such

work only for the master but for the community of practice and therefore also for oneself as a family member. The point is that in friendship, the master and apprentice were more than mere objects to each other. This sense of respect is illustrated in the following.

Marianne: “Well when you are kind of part of the family, which I think we were, you learn: that is the way he [the master] wants it. And that is how it should be. And if it [the craft product] is all right, you get something in return. And that is an important thing, I think, that you learn that you also have to contribute to this.”

Interviewer: “And in return what do you receive?”

Marianne: “Well you get a greater joy out of working and you receive praise, when you have done something properly. And you get the reward that you can see that it has led somewhere and you also learn yourself to see: well, that is right, things have to look nice, it must be clean here, otherwise it does not work.”

The interview excerpt points to the fact that becoming a member of the community included being integrated both in the workshop and the family. The interview quotation also indicates that the apprentice took over the master’s standards (for instance in regards to a clean workshop) and experienced a reward (a joy of working) as she fulfilled these demands and when she saw that she fulfilled them. This appropriation hinges on the fact that the apprentice found it worthwhile to work for the master and hereby could gain mutual recognition. There are many quotations in the research interviews with the participants where the apprentices recounted stories about dining, going to the movie theatre or the beach with the master and his family. And these personal relations would often last for many years after the apprentices had finished their apprenticeship. This can be interpreted in terms of the master recognising the apprentices as concrete persons, in terms of close personal relations and as signs of the apprentices achieving a

double-membership in the workshop community as well as in the master’s family.

The relation between master and apprentice could often become based on genuine reciprocal respect. The master stated:

Bent Exner: “The apprentices [were] dear friends [who] drove the children to music lessons etc. They got a chat with the children at the same time. And an apprentice who has a driver’s license is proud. He drives in the master’s car or rather just the car, because they were allowed to use the car if I was not using it: ‘here you go’.”

The apprentices helped out in the family. In return for their commitment in the family (and the workshop of course) they would be rewarded materially in terms of being allowed to borrow the car or personally in terms of friendship with the master. The link between workshop and family was also stated metaphorically: “*Therefore they [the apprentices] do not receive exactly the same treatment. The reason is that if you love your children and you have many children, you do not treat them equally*” (the master). The master evokes the metaphor of children in describing his relation to his apprentices. The significance of the statement lies in the possibility that the master recognised his apprentices not only abstractly as persons with certain legal rights, but more importantly as concrete persons – each different from the other. There is evidence that there was a high degree of mutual recognition between the participants in the workshop.

To sum up, the themes of love, family and friendship were interwoven in the statements of the participants and the significance for learning lies in its over-personal sense, whereby the master is not simply a man with random desires and standpoints as to his liking and disliking of objects and selves (e.g. of what artefacts to produce or what personality characteristics to look for in good apprentices), but the expert master impersonating the high craft standards. The participants sat the standards and were sat

by the standards and engaged in dialogue for instance about artistic expression, about struggling with yourself to maintain high technical standards or going beyond yourself in demonstrating your sacrifice for the craft.

6 Discussion

This article has argued that the notion of recognition serves to underpin sociocultural approaches to learning by weaving together self and other in the processes of self mastery and person formation mediated not abstractly by cultural tools alone, but concretely by everyday struggles whereby each aimed to be taken as an autonomous or self-independent person. The article has investigated a case of apprenticeship where participation and learning were interpreted as mirroring struggles for recognition.

As argued, Hegel's notion of recognition can throw light upon the intersubjective dimensions of learning and development. This article makes a case that a narrow focus on dyadic relationships should be overcome. An understanding of recognition in terms of dyadic relationships casts the category merely in terms of two agents for instance apprentice and master struggling for respect etc. This understanding lends much from the conception of the master-slave relation, which as mentioned earlier is only the most rudimentary form of recognition. In itself there is nothing wrong in studying learning in terms of say a student desiring to appropriate some learning material for instance to achieve some instrumental end towards an object, or a teacher suppressing a student, or two learners collaborating on collective learning tasks or the students' motivation to obtain better grades or the role of seduction, attraction etc. between student and teacher. But it is more fruitful to conceive of the link between learning and recognition in terms of social struggles between institutions or indeed classes played out within

intersubjective relations and communities of practices.

While this social struggle has potential ramifications for the way people live their everyday lives, Hegel's notion of recognition cannot be used pre-reflexively or by picking out a couple of citations to borrow Vygotsky's (1997b: 330) point about applying Marx' notions as reified categories ready to explain the empirical world. For instance, the issue of life and death struggle to Hegel (1807/1977: 114) was a necessary logical movement towards mutual recognition (since as argued it requires that the agents stake their lives to prove that they are autonomous). There is not a direct relationship between this logical level of a philosophy and the empirical level – while Hegel's notion of recognition posits a life and death struggle and the master slave relation we cannot infer that education or curriculum should be built on the idea that students should engage in such struggle or institutions. But to say that there is no direct link is not to say that there is no link: on the one hand Hegel's notion of recognition depicts a logical system, and on the other hand it is preconditioned upon a historical development that has made social institutions (like the family or goldsmith apprenticeship) possible. This article has tried to demonstrate that apprenticeship learning was temporally situated in the institution of apprenticeship and in the everyday, continuous, contemporary struggle for recognition associated with learning and development. But the point is that a sociocultural (or cultural historical activity or situated) account of learning has to create its own meaning of the essence of the phenomenon of recognition, not merely borrow Hegel's.

Person formation and personality development are both terms used in this paper (and it would lead too far here to differentiate these terms from each other or from identity development), but what is the relation between recognition and formation of persons? As mentioned, Hegel conceived of the formation

of person and reason as fundamentally social and as coming into being through recognition (Pinkard, 1996). This implies that forms of recognition depend on interactions between people. To recognise someone plus being recognised either “formally” (in terms of title or status) or “informally” (e.g. in terms of appreciation) connotes, as mentioned above, a double-relation. This double-relation refers not so much to the act of granting plus receiving as to the resulting relation that the agent gets to an other and to him- or herself, in other words to the formation of the other and him- or herself. Recognition carries an attributing and a receptive meaning through which the agents achieve a doubling of their relations to each other and to themselves. Thus recognition is not only the accomplishment of the agent in terms of satisfying someone’s desire through praise, admiration etc.; recognition also has a receptive side. The receptive side is expressed as a human right and something perceived or experienced by the subject.

Even though cultural historical psychology⁸ has formulated ideas about personality development, the logical steps leading to person formation have not been sufficiently spelled out in connection with Hegel’s notion of recognition. In spite of his familiarity with Hegel’s philosophy, Vygotsky (1998: 171) only very indirectly touched upon the notion of

recognition in developing the concept of the “formation of the personality” to cases “only when there is mastery of the person’s own behaviour.” In trying to explain how learning can be understood as a change in relations between an individual and the world due to change in the learner’s capacity for using tools and interpreting artefacts, to use Hedegaard’s (2002) definition, it would be necessary to view the learner in the world in terms of acts of granting and being granted personhood. And these relations could be hypothesised to mirror a struggle for recognition in the sense that the changing relations of learner-world are contingent upon the learner being able to recognise others and be recognised by others.

7 Conclusion

According to Hegel, self-determination was mediated through recognition, which was fundamentally social. When applying Hegel’s notion of recognition to learning we cannot ignore that recognition springs from more than a single self-consciousness’ emptiness wanting to devour the desire of another self-consciousness. A first step in transcending this dyadic understanding could be to view acts of recognition in terms of communal agents acting within communities of practice, like goldsmith apprenticeship. This step might demonstrate that recognition holds the promise of theoretically underpinning the movements leading from one-way recognition (as in the mastery-slavery institution) to mutual recognition, and beyond dyadic relationships in terms of communities struggling for rights and recognition.

In investigating craft apprenticeship and the union of family and workshop, this article has offered a hypothesis as to the process of personality development mediated by recognition of the other as an apprentice, master and even friend or family member. The article has argued that the meaning of the concept of

⁸ Cultural historical psychology has generally not developed the notion of recognition. Vygotsky’s (1978: 57) point about the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal (the genetic law of development), points to the importance of intersubjective relations for higher psychological functions not recognition as such. As argued by Lektorsky (1999: 66) Leontiev did not explicate the meaning of intersubjective relations. However, Álvarez and del Río (1999: 305) have investigated the importance of recognition in connection with personality development, and conceive of recognition as “a deeper reflexive process of accepting identity concerning a symbiotic unit of oneself (relation with ourselves)” (p.305). Unfortunately, Álvarez and del Río do not elaborate on this definition or on whether it has any references to Hegel’s notion of the term.

recognition discussed in this article goes much beyond verbal praise, feedback and seduction. The article has linked learning with notions of person formation by pointing to recognition of somebody's abstract and concrete person-ality. Recognition is an essential analytical category, which can explain the construction of identities on the concrete level as love and friendship between people and abstractly, on the political level in terms of granting rights, securing higher wages for the journeywoman etc. Apart from the difficulties in applying a philosophical category to a contemporary social practice there seems to be every good reason to investigate how recognition explains how and why somebody might learn and develop through some forms of participation.

Recognition is not only an analytical concept, but also a normative concept that should be worked out in concrete practice and thus the notion points to an ideal, namely to foster the conditions for mutual recognition. This requires a sociocultural approach to recognition and learning on intersubjective and institutional levels of analysis and practice.

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