

Review Essay

Pilapil on the Theory and Praxis of Recognition

PAOLO A. BOLAÑOS

Renante D. Pilapil, *Recognition: Examining Identity Struggles*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015. 194 pp.

During the course of the last decade, interest in recognition theory, especially the one inaugurated by Axel Honneth's *Kampf um Anerkennung* (1992, translated into English as *The Struggle for Recognition* in 1995), has been constantly increasing. Recognition theory is already, according to Christopher Zurn, "a well-established and mature research paradigm in philosophy."¹ While this interest has been sustained by numerous journal articles, there are, however, only a handful of book-length commentaries worth mentioning that deal with Honneth's recognition theory directly or indirectly. Perhaps, in the English-speaking world, one of the earliest attempts at a commentary on Honneth's recognition theory is Simon Thompson's *The Political Theory of Recognition* (2006), where he introduces the philosophical idea of recognition by making Charles Taylor, Nancy Fraser, and Honneth dialogue in dialectical

¹ Christopher Zurn, "Introduction," in *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 1.

fashion.² This was followed by the volume, *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (2007), edited by Bert Van Den Brink and David Owen.³ Arguably the most notable book-length commentary is Jean-Philippe Deranty's *Beyond Communication. A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy* (2009), still unparalleled for its most comprehensive intellectual history of Honneth's social philosophy, outlining its beginnings in Marx down to its development in Honneth's reappraisal of the Frankfurt School tradition.⁴ What is missing in *Beyond Communication*, however, is a treatment of the more recent writings of Honneth, such as *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (2012) and *Freedom's Right* (2014), among others.⁵ After *Beyond Communication*, the following are some notable volumes: *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (2010), edited by Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher Zurn; *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays* (2011), edited by Danielle Petherbridge; Miriam Bankovsky's *Perfecting Justice in Rawls, Habermas and Honneth: A Deconstructive Perspective* (2012); and Christopher Zurn's *Axel Honneth* (2015). What the above commentaries demonstrate is the deepening discourse on Honneth's recognition theory.⁶

² See Simon Thompson, *The Political Theory of Recognition: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

³ See Bert van den Brink and David Oweneds, *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴ See Jean-Philippe Deranty, *Beyond Communication: A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

⁵ See Axel Honneth, *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*, trans. Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), and *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, trans. Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014).

⁶ See the following: Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher Zurn eds., *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2010); Danielle Petherbridge, ed., *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Miriam Bankovsky, *Perfecting Justice in Rawls, Habermas and Honneth: A Deconstructive Perspective* (London: Continuum, 2012); and Christopher Zurn, *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*.

Indeed, the “struggle for recognition” has become a paradigmatic framework in recent debates in social and political theory; replacing, to some extent, the Marxist emphasis on class struggle. While for some thinkers this shift from class struggle to the struggle for recognition is a positive development in political struggles, as it extends the ontological claim of freedom beyond class, there are still those who think that the shift is a disavowal of the real goal of political struggle.

The publication of Renante D. Pilapil’s *Recognition: Examining Identity Struggles* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on recognition theory. The author presents the book as a critical assessment of the current debates in recognition theory, outlining its theoretical presuppositions, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as its applicability in actual political life. While the author’s interest in the philosophical study of recognition was urged by the very same theoretical issues that inspired earlier commentaries on recognition, such as the philosophical anthropology of recognition and politics of identity and difference, the book goes beyond simply introducing recognition theory as a philosophical paradigm (like the works of Deranty and Zurn), having a practico-personal motivation. As a native of Mindanao, Pilapil’s philosophical journey has been profoundly motivated by his experience of the Muslim rebellion in southern Philippines. He says that he wants to “understand . . . the normative contents of the Moro resistance” and to “make philosophizing more relevant to [his] own context.”⁷ To some degree, *Recognition* is a pioneering work for a couple of reasons: it is the first book on recognition

⁷ Pilapil, vii.

theory published in the Philippines and it is also the first to use the Moro struggle in Mindanao as a test case for examining the normative validity of recognition theory.⁸ Pilapil puts it plainly: “The struggle for recognition is particularly evident in the Moro struggle in Muslim Mindanao.”⁹

Despite Pilapil’s acknowledgment of the struggle for recognition of the Moros—one which he attempts to present against the backdrop of the recognition of identity and difference—he does point out that such a struggle should not be taken as a given since it poses conceptual and practical problems. In this context, Pilapil argues that the normative justifications for “formative recognition” must be examined in order to answer why particular social groups deserve to be granted special rights on the basis of their identity recognition. This, according to Pilapil, leads us to question whether such clamor for identity recognition, which usually manifests as “collective political resistance,” is “moral” in the first place on account of the experience of “misrecognition” of these social groups,¹⁰ such as the Moros. However, contextualizing the struggle for recognition of the Moros required a long discussion of some of the main issues of recognition theory.

The structure of Pilapil’s book is based on the following theoretical assumptions: “1) formal affirmative recognition as a

⁸ A very similar attempt is found in Karl M. Gaspar’s *Manobo Dreams in Arakan: A People’s Struggle to Keep Their Homeland* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2011). Some differences should be mentioned, however. Gaspar’s focus is on the Manobo, a Lumad ethnolinguistic group different from the Moros; moreover, he employs Habermas’s theory of communication as a theoretical framework and his approach is socio-anthropological. Another difference is that Gaspar’s study is more in-depth, while Pilapil presents his analysis of the Moro struggle as a test case. Nevertheless, both Gaspar and Pilapil want to understand the normative contents of the plight of the Manobos and Moros, respectively, in terms of their cultural identity and misrecognized claim of their ancestral lands. Pilapil, xi-xiii.

⁹ Ibid., xi.

¹⁰ Ibid., xiii.

strategy for responding to identity claims may suffer from problematic implications but it seems that it is the best means available for us to respond to identity claims; 2) recognition struggles of identity groups are grounded in a moral basis, particularly the experience of disrespect and humiliation; and 3) despite the apparent central position that struggles for recognition have taken today, it is uncalled for to downplay the relevance of struggles for redistribution.”¹¹ In elaborating these theoretical assumptions, Pilapil divides his discussion into six chapters. It is important to provide summaries of all six because each one forms an integral part of the logical flow of *Recognition*. This is a commendable feature of Pilapil’s book: it introduces the reader to the theory of recognition through careful steps, allowing the reader to discover various facets of recognition that are usually absent in other commentaries.

In Chapter 1, “The Politics of Cultural Recognition,” two important figures in contemporary social and political philosophy from Canada are critically examined: Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka. Both Taylor and Kymlicka’s positions on the politics of recognition are well debated today; both are known for their contributions to the discourse on multiculturalism. Pilapil points out that Taylor and Kymlicka agree that “cultural minority groups” deserve to be recognized. Here is where they differ: on the one hand, Taylor emphasizes “individualized identity” (through the ideas of authenticity and the logic of difference);¹² on the other, Kymlicka focuses on “group-differentiated rights” (through the

¹¹ Ibid., xiii.

¹² Ibid., 4-17.

ideas of personal autonomy and social equality).¹³ It is basically a difference on which normative justifications to be emphasized, in the attempt to solve the issue of multiculturalism which, in modern societies, could be a venue for the disrespect or misrecognition of cultural groups not regarded as part of the majority culture.

While Pilapil appreciates and admits that what Taylor and Kymlicka offer are powerful discourses on multiculturalism, he takes issue with specific aspects of their respective theories. For instance, he finds as “naïve optimism” Taylor’s seeming disregard for the fact “that what the individual desires does not necessarily coincide with the preferences of the group to which he belongs.”¹⁴ Meanwhile, although he favors Kymlicka’s position more than Taylor’s, Pilapil is disappointed that Kymlicka did not provide “mechanisms for evaluating the strength and veracity of identity claims.”¹⁵ Moreover, both philosophers, Pilapil maintains, do not specify which sort of communities and practices deserve protection,¹⁶ thereby offering merely generalized accounts of how to resolve disrespect in multicultural societies. As such, even if it is by no means their intention, Taylor and Kymlicka’s accounts run the risk of endorsing normative justifications that may possibly legitimize even cultural practices that actually oppress individual members of a given culture (e.g., the discrimination of women in various forms).

Pilapil’s critique of Taylor and Kymlicka shows us that the “moral” or “ethical” aspect of their theories of recognition are

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17-28.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

not well developed or, at least, weak—despite their emphasis on the role of cultural identity in providing meaningful lives to the members of a given group. Pilapil's first chapter provides the proper theoretical context for the basic themes of the politics of recognition, namely, the recognition of cultural identity and the granting of collective and group-differentiated rights to those groups that are demanding for recognition. These are, for him, standard responses to the problem of multiculturalism.¹⁷ However, other camps, dubbed by Pilapil as “proponents of deconstruction,” find the standard responses of Taylor and Kymlicka to be problematic and propose, instead, “a deep restructuring of relations of recognition and destabilization of group differentiation.”¹⁸

In Chapter 2, “Between Affirmation and Contestation,” Pilapil amplifies his critique of the formal affirmative recognition model espoused by Taylor and Kymlicka. Thereafter, the “contestation approach” of James Tully, another Canadian philosopher, is explored. The problem with formal affirmative recognition, according to Pilapil, is that it has the tendency to reify identity, rendering it susceptible to the pitfalls of power and ideology.¹⁹ The reification of identity, via formal affirmative recognition, has two aspects. First, it assumes that an identity of a culture can be arbitrarily traced back in history and has remained the same from time immemorial. Second, there is a tendency to reduce a culture into specific practices which displaces other cultural practices that are also important in the overall integrity of the culture.²⁰ Pilapil

¹⁷ Ibid., 33.

¹⁸ Ibid., 34.

¹⁹ Ibid., 34–43.

²⁰ Ibid., 34–35.

contrasts the anti-essentialist argument of so-called “proponents of deconstruction,” such as Stuart Hall and Seyla Benhabib, with the standard view. Anti-essentialism features the belief that unified identity is a necessary construct and, as a construct, it is a product of continuous social interaction. In opposing a static conception of cultural identity, anti-essentialism features an understanding of cultural identity that is malleable inasmuch as cultural reproduction occurs immanently within a culture.²¹ However, instead of readily accepting the deconstructionist position, Pilapil ambivalently points out that such position has the tendency to ignore the importance of the normative role of cultural membership in shaping the existential meaning of the lives of a culture’s members. Hence, it is not easy to jump from one culture to another. Pilapil further points out that both the essentialists and anti-essentialists fail to pay attention to the dialectics of “continuity” and “discontinuity” in cultural formation. It is naïve to disregard continuity despite the various changes that happen within a cultural group; there is always something that remains identifiable among its members, such as language and traditions.²² Another worry Pilapil levels against formal affirmative recognition is its tendency to become an “accomplice” to the perpetuation of power and ideology. In particular, there is the possibility that relations of power may be dissimulated as cultural recognition, convincing agents to blindly adhere to the “authority” of the dominant culture and thereby maintaining repressive hierarchical structures. It is in this context—the maintenance of repressive dominant

²¹ Ibid., 36.

²² Ibid., 36-37.

structures—that formal affirmative recognition becomes the apparatus for ideological domination of people.²³ Nevertheless, upon pointing out the problematic position of formal affirmative recognition, Pilapil returns to the promise of the deconstructive critique of ideology as a potent approach in the exposition of instances of misrecognition or injustice, which are primarily caused by the pathology of power play.²⁴

Still in the second chapter, Pilapil explores Tully's "contestation approach" as an alternative to the problematic formal affirmative recognition. Following Tully, he argues that struggles for recognition are not as straightforward as what the affirmative approach presupposes. Rather, they are "agonistic," that is to say, struggles are an interplay between consensus and dissensus, as in the case of democratic states. However, this agonistic interaction within society is characterized, according to Tully, by the "cooperation" of individual members who collectively behave according to set norms or rules that constitute a cooperative whole. Through this, "they gain some understanding of their 'identity' as members of a cooperative system."²⁵ To some degree, Pilapil favors Tully's recommendation as it seems to avoid the same practical problems that haunt formal affirmative recognition. More specifically, the contestation approach does not essentialize identity, is fully aware of the reality of power relations and ideology, and does not posit a utopia. However, despite its more favorable characteristics, Pilapil cautions us that as with the affirmative approach, the contestation approach also results in

²³ Ibid., 39-40.

²⁴ Ibid., 43.

²⁵ Ibid., 49.

problems it cannot resolve on its own. For example, it may not be the best model of recognition in unstable societies ravaged by war and conflict, it may breed merely “empty solidarity” because of its emphasis on the malleability of social relations, and it seems to ignore the fact that the demand for recognition has a moral basis (“being morally wronged as a person”) that goes beyond the practical concerns of cultural membership.²⁶

What Pilapil reveals in the first two chapters of *Recognition* are the strengths and weaknesses of both the affirmative and contestation approaches to recognition. He argues that while there are benefits to be gained from the two—such as the recognition of cultural identities and a possible way of avoiding the reification of these identities—both approaches are replete with practical problems they cannot resolve on their own terms. Pilapil is, moreover, emphatic that they miss “an account of the moral or ethical ground” of recognitive struggles. More specifically these approaches lack an account of the “moral-practical-identity,” which, for Pilapil, “refers to the socio-psychological conditions necessary for having an identity in the first place.”²⁷ For example, the affirmative approach’s emphasis on essential identity begs the question of how, in the first place, such an identity is formed. Meanwhile, the contestation approach’s emphasis on the predominance of agonistic interaction seemingly reduces the members of society into pliable agents as opposed to persons who adhere to real principles.

²⁶ Ibid., 49-57.

²⁷ Ibid., 60.

The third chapter, “Recognition and the Making of Persons,” addresses the foregoing issue by exploring the ethics of recognition of Axel Honneth, privileging it over the theories of Taylor, Kymlicka, and Tully. One can appreciate Honneth’s ethics of recognition, as Pilapil does, because it is more comprehensive in terms of its ontological assumptions. It may very well respond to the practical problems resulting from the other two approaches. Pilapil notes that Honneth’s ethics of recognition is superior to other approaches because 1) it is a convincing philosophical anthropology, grounding the idea of identity in the development of persons through intersubjective recognition; 2) it emphasizes the moral or ethical dimension of social interactions because it is based on a normative conception of personhood, thereby making sense of misrecognition as a moral injury that incites the struggle for recognition; and 3) it may very well survive the charge of essentialism because personhood is not necessarily grounded in fixed ontological categories, but, rather, on differences based on historical and social peculiarities.²⁸

As the book’s third chapter is the most theoretically important, it is worthwhile to briefly outline Pilapil’s reconstruction of Honneth’s ethics of recognition (derived mainly from *The Struggle for Recognition*). First, Honneth’s return to the normative role of intersubjectivity, via the Jena writings of Hegel and the social psychology of Mead, is rehearsed. With Hegel, Honneth is able to establish the ontological primacy of intersubjectivity as the basis of the development of personal identity; meanwhile, with Mead, it becomes possible to construe intersubjective interaction in

²⁸ Ibid., 61, 84.

psychological terms—that is to say, recognitive interaction gains normative primacy precisely because, by nature, humans are interactive beings.²⁹ Second, the three spheres of recognition—love, respect, and esteem—are given ample treatment. The three spheres constitute Honneth’s philosophical anthropology—it is through these spheres that Honneth explains how a moral identity evolves within an individual. Love breeds self-confidence, allowing an individual to learn the basic social skills needed for further social integration; respect is the awareness that one is endowed with basic social rights, allowing an individual to participate in the realization of universal social norms; and esteem is the normative basis of solidarity, maintaining social bonds inasmuch as the individual identity of a person is recognized by a larger community or group. In sum, it is through the three spheres that the moral-practical identity of an individual is developed.³⁰ Third, Pilapil elaborates on how the moral-practical identity of an individual is actualized through the three spheres—that they are not merely empty beliefs, but, rather, concrete situations that materially ground the continuous socialization of an individual. If these intersubjective scenarios are not realized, then pathological instances of misrecognition ensue. Therefore, each of the three spheres has its own corresponding deontological expectation that needs to be fulfilled, namely, the duty to love or care, the duty to respect the equality of all, and the duty to promote solidarity. As such, for Honneth, social recognition is not simply a pragmatic good, but, rather, it has ontological primacy inasmuch as it

²⁹ Ibid., 62-66.

³⁰ Ibid., 66-75.

provides the very basic conditions for an individual's self-realization.³¹ Fourth, Pilapil defends Honneth's theory of recognition from the accusation of essentialism, maintaining that, as opposed to the Platonic notion of essence, "personhood" for Honneth is based on features that are "historically or contextually dependent, representing only a particular vantage point of understanding persons."³²

While the third chapter exposes the ontological presuppositions of Honneth's theory of recognition, Chapter 4, "The Concept of Recognitive Justice," extends the discussion to the relationship between recognition and justice. This chapter does two things. First, it reconstructs Honneth's "recognition-theoretical conception of justice." Second, it defends Honneth from Nancy Fraser's accusation of the psychologization of injustice that deflects the publicity criterion. Pilapil points out that, for Honneth, social justice refers to how social institutions fulfill the deontological expectations of recognitive relations. According to Honneth, the misrecognition of "intact personal identity," grounded in the fulfillment of the three spheres of recognition, results in the feeling of "moral injury." In other words, social injustice is the result of the misrecognition of an individual's "personhood." Moreover, the three spheres of recognition, in addition to their deontological expectations, may be juxtaposed to three principles of justice: love, equality, and merit.³³ Meanwhile, Pilapil, argues against Fraser on two counts. First, he takes issue with Fraser's unwitting dismissal of the role of moral suffering in the claim for

³¹ Ibid., 75-79.

³² Ibid., 83.

³³ Ibid., 86-95.

social justice, where moral suffering is construed as the experience of injustice at the psychological level. Second, while not downplaying the importance of the publicity criterion (the justification, verification, or defense of claims through public articulation or discourse), Pilapil sharply points out that the publicity criterion might not be effective in cases where the disenfranchised parties do not have the capacity to voice out their claims.³⁴

From his competent reconstruction of the basic ontological presuppositions of Honneth's theory of recognition and discussion of Honneth's notion of social justice, Pilapil moves on to an account of the relation between recognition and redistribution in Chapter 5. He maintains that this is one of the goals of his book—to salvage the idea of “redistribution.” Redistribution, as an alternative to cultural recognition, is championed by the American critical theorist, Nancy Fraser. In the previous chapter, Pilapil highlights Fraser's critical stance on Honneth's theory of recognition; specifically, she accuses Honneth of psychologism that disavows the publicity criterion. While Pilapil is very critical of Fraser in Chapter 4, he affably reinstates in Chapter 5 the superiority of Fraser's theory of redistribution against the monistic approaches of Honneth and John Rawls. Pilapil maintains that both Honneth and Rawls do not ignore the issue of redistribution. Honneth acknowledges the importance of how redistributive justice contributes to the fulfilment of self-esteem in individuals, especially in the context of work. The economy, Honneth claims, is bound to the moral

³⁴ Ibid., 95-111.

principle of individual justice and self-realization. In other words, redistribution, in this context, is understood in terms of its recognitive potential.³⁵ Rawls, for his part, also maintains the relation between redistribution and recognition; however, he views the latter as merely a type of the former. Since Rawls gives normative priority to redistribution, he understands justice as the equal access of all members of society to material and non-material goods, such as wealth, opportunities, and rights.³⁶

Pilapil takes issue with the somewhat reductive approaches of Honneth and Rawls. As such, he favors Fraser's "dualistic" approach of presenting both redistribution and recognition as two faces of the same kind of justice. Moreover, Fraser favors a balance between redistribution and recognition in such a way that injustice is viewed only as caused by economic inequality or viewed only as a result of cultural misrecognition. However, while Pilapil finds Fraser's proposal promising, he admits that her position is, nevertheless, not without its theoretical and practical challenges.³⁷ In actuality, there are some situations where the issue is economic redistribution and others where it is cultural misrecognition; but, as Pilapil rightly observes, the interconnection between the two is often intricate.

The first five chapters of *Recognition* constitute the theoretical part of Pilapil's book. The sixth and last chapter presents the praxis part. The three normative assumptions of the struggle for recognition, presented in the first five chapters, are the following: 1) it is informed by the politics of cultural identity, which calls for

³⁵ Ibid., 115-22.

³⁶ Ibid., 122-37.

³⁷ Ibid., 137-50.

the formal recognition of individuals and minority groups on the basis of identity and difference; 2) it has a moral dimension based on the normative, and natural, desires to be loved, respected, and esteemed—basic requirements for the realization of personhood; and 3) it should not be separated from issues of redistribution that pertain to the economic dimension of the struggle for social justice. After providing the reader with a comprehensive historical account of the Moro struggle in Mindanao,³⁸ Pilapil uses these assumptions to offer a normative analysis of the situation. Pilapil highlights the fact that the Moros have had a very long experience of injustice. As a culture, they have been deprived of their ancestral lands, are marginalized, and are discriminated against because they are Muslim. In other words, their identity as a culture is largely misrecognized, even caricatured, and stigmatized; self determination is difficult without external judgment. The long experience of marginalization and discrimination has had a moral-psychological impact on the Moros, especially in the way they are prejudicially treated in the spheres of respect and esteem. Moreover, since their traditional economic practices have been destroyed by Spanish colonization, Christian evangelization, and American capitalism, their economic well-being has been neglected.³⁹

Pilapil has gifted us with an important and, I must add, indispensable book on recognition. It is an important book because it offers a competent and instructive theoretical tracing of the various themes and issues related to the theory of recognition. *Recognition* is an engaging and riveting read. The book is indispensable because it offers a powerful analysis of the

³⁸ Ibid., 153-58.

³⁹ Ibid., 158-66.

normative issues related to the Moro struggle, and Filipino readers should not fail to appreciate it. Despite these strong characteristics of the book, I am nevertheless compelled to mention three critical observations. They should not signal strong disagreements with the author, but are rather clarificatory and conversational.

In Chapter 2, Pilapil takes issue with the anti-essentialist stance of Seyla Benhabib in relation to the politics of identity and difference. He accuses Benhabib of ignoring the importance of “cultural continuity.” The critique is based on the following passage from Benhabib: “Identity/difference politics is afflicted by the paradox of wanting to preserve the purity of the impure, the immutability of the historical, and the fundamentalness of the contingent.”⁴⁰ Pilapil’s worry is that this statement dismisses the role of cultural continuity, which he locates in the language and tradition of a culture. However, Pilapil’s rebuttal does not exactly belie what Benhabib is saying in the quotation. I believe that Benhabib is merely emphasizing, albeit in a very rhetorical or hyperbolic manner, the tendency of essentialism to freeze the fluid nature of identity formation. This, I think, is not a disavowal of cultural continuity, but shows that even cultural continuity relies on the fluid or dialectical nature of human history. In relation to this, what Benhabib is disavowing is the tendency of cultural essentialism to impose ideological principles via dissimulated acts of recognition. Pilapil himself discusses the relation between recognition and ideology in the same chapter.

Pilapil also noticeably borrows some insights from Nikolas Kompridis several times throughout the book, especially when

⁴⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*, 37.

trying to buttress some of Honneth's claims. However, he does not mention the fact that Kompridis is very critical of Honneth's recognition theory. As a matter of fact, Kompridis positions himself somewhat in diametrical opposition to Honneth and Habermas. Perhaps the most penetrating criticism of Kompridis is found in the essay "From Reason to Self-Realisation? Axel Honneth and the 'Ethical Turn' in Critical Theory,"⁴¹ where Kompridis takes issue with Honneth's use of medical terms, such as "social pathology," to describe social anomalies. Kompridis is worried that the over-medicalization of the language of social critique unnecessarily assumes a normative stance where the social critic identifies a "social analogue of normality and health" that may become the basis of a universalistic, that is to say ideological, ethics of a good life.⁴² Instead of medical terms, Kompridis would rather use terms such as "crisis" or "breakdown" in order to avoid the epistemic privilege that comes with medical terminology.⁴³

In relation to these, despite its author's indebtedness to Honneth and the latter's privileged place in the book, *Recognition* does not offer an intellectual history of Honneth's relation to the Frankfurt School tradition, which may be beneficial for readers who are not familiar with how Honneth's theory of recognition has been influenced by his engagement with Habermas. Honneth's more recent essays have also been re-engagements with the first generation critical theorists, especially Theodor Adorno. It is understandable however that these perhaps go beyond the set goal of the book.

⁴¹ Nikolas Kompridis, "From Reason to Self-Realisation? Axel Honneth and the 'Ethical Turn' in Critical Theory," *Critical Horizons* 5 (2004): 323-60.

⁴² Ibid., 338.

⁴³ Ibid., 341.

I consider myself privileged to have read *Recognition*. Pilapil's writing style is perspicuous, a basic trait of good writers. But while it is clear and straightforward, *Recognition* is also packed with critical arguments and factual information, adding to the nuanced structure of each chapter. The book, therefore, is not an easy read, for it requires the reader's earnest and full attention. It is not only indispensable for us with research interest in recognition theory. More than the philosophical significance it offers, which I argue is a veritable contribution to Filipino Philosophy, I recommend *Recognition* to all the stakeholders—the Philippine government, corporations, Moros, Lumads, Christians—for its practicality. Our demand for recognition must also be informed by our realization that we are all guilty of misrecognition, in one form or another.

Author

Paolo A. Bolaños is the Head of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. He holds an MA in Philosophy from Brock University, Canada, and a PhD in Philosophy from Macquarie University, Australia. His areas of expertise are mainly on Nietzsche, Adorno, Deleuze, Frankfurt School Critical Theory, and Post-Marxism. He is the Vice-President of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP), Inc. and is a member of the Philippine Academy of Philosophical Research (PAPR). Bolaños is the editor of *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* (www.kritike.org) and the author of *On Affirmation and Becoming: A Deleuzian Introduction to Nietzsche's Ethics and Ontology* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). <pabolanos@ust.edu.ph>