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Identity Recognition and the Normative Challenge of Crowd Psychology

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Abstract *Recent social psychology (Graumann, Moscovici, Rouquette) offers convincing descriptions of crowd behavior without providing an equally satisfactory account of its normative infrastructure. Marxist philosophy, under the influence of early Critical Theory, successfully deals with the normative component of crowd behavior at the price of reducing its psychological dimension to impersonal socio-economic forces. This paper uses Axel Honneth's conception of recognition to work out a comprehensive account of crowd phenomena that can integrate the superior descriptive capacity of the psychodynamic analysis of crowd behavior into the normative analysis of practical attitudes of misrecognition. The result is a normative explanation of crowd behavior from within the psychologically experienced attitude of social disrespect that promises to reconcile the empirical research of contemporary social psychology with the theoretical aspirations of post-Marxist critical social theory.*

Typical manifestations of violent mass action seem to support the intuitive appeal of the traditional but somewhat discredited distinction in social psychology between the “natural” (or “spontaneous”) and the “artificial” (or “organized”) crowd (Moscovici, 1981). If the artificial crowd is reducible to socio-economic conditions and thereby explainable in terms of a system-induced production of false consciousness that normatively underwrites the collective attitudes of the massified individuals, the natural crowd captures the empirical reality of a particular kind of large-scale group dynamic with a legitimate claim to psychological autonomy. Recent social psychology has done a convincing job of describing in great detail the typology and collective behavior of the natural crowd without, however, offering an equally satisfactory account of its normative infrastructure. The result is an explanation of crowd “phenomena” that successfully overcomes the mystical power ontology and ideological prejudices of earlier crowd psychology (Le Bon, Tarde). Yet this type of explanation ends up either deriving all normativity from the impersonal mechanics of intra-group interaction and inter-group confrontation (Graumann, 1984, Reicher 2001), or else simply dissolving normativity in the dream life of pre-logical group cognition and affectivity (Rouquette, 1994). Critical Theory on the other hand has had a long and prestigious history of making transparent the normative mechanisms of the massification process that generates highly submissive and easily deployable artificial crowds either, following Marx and Lukács,

in terms of the material conditions of thinking and action that determine class consciousness, or, in the wake of Freud's application of the theory of the drives to group psychology (and drawing on the revolutionary psychoanalysis of Federn, Fromm, Reich or Broch), in terms of the relationship between the socio-economic structures of power and those of personality. However, the sociological tendencies of early Critical Theory have also led to a reductionist explanation of mass psychology. This means that the normative gain of the reductive analysis of mass phenomena was achieved at the price of a loss of descriptive power, which left Critical Theory unable to properly account for a wealth of collective psychological experiences whose importance for social and political life could be dismissed as a theoretical and practical distraction. As Adorno himself put it, Critical Theory lost sight of the “fluid reality of psychological life” (Adorno, 1982, p. 346).

This paper proposes one way of bridging the gap between psychological explanation and social critique by integrating the superior descriptive capacity of the psychodynamic analysis of crowd behavior into the normative account of identity formation in asymmetrical experiences of moral injury. The conceptual scheme that promises to unlock the normative potential of crowd psychology is Axel Honneth's theory of recognition (and misrecognition), which provides the theoretical standpoint for a moral explanation of crowd behavior that is pursued from within the psychologically experienced attitude of social disrespect. This

paper develops this idea in four steps. The first section clarifies the distinction between natural and artificial crowds by explaining it in terms of the more familiar notions of normative statuses and attitudes, personal and group identity, and recognition. In a second step, the paper introduces the problematic of mass or crowd phenomena as presented in the classic works of Le Bon and Tarde. This section highlights the fact that these authors dissolve the normative component of collective mental attitudes in the allegedly neutral psychological description of natural power relations. This is followed by a schematic reconstruction of early Critical Theory's involvement with mass psychology through a succinct discussion of select passages from Freud and Adorno in order to illustrate the gradual shift away from this psychology of power relations in the natural crowd and toward the socio-economic structures and institutional mechanisms of control and domination that explain the emergence of the artificial crowds (of which the group psychology of the natural crowd is only the surface expression). Lastly, the paper focuses on some aspects of Axel Honneth's theory of identity recognition that promise to reconcile the normative demands of critical social theory with the psychological insights gained from the non-reductive empirical investigation of crowd phenomena. This account is then empirically validated against some of the more recent theories of crowd behavior, and especially Stephen Reicher's.

Terminology and Conceptual Clarifications

How much theoretical authority should we grant the distinction between natural and artificial crowds? The distinction, first introduced by Gabriel Tarde (1910) and then taken up in various guises by a variety of authors, seems plausible enough on an intuitive level based on our experience with the various modes of collective behavior of certain groups of people. What we witness in riots, mobs, panics, commotions, stampedes, etc. is clearly different from the collective behavior of concert audiences, factory workers, political assemblies, religious sects or army personnel. The distinction becomes even more convincing when we try to break it down into narrower subcategories according to the various descriptors used by contemporary social psychologists to produce detailed classifications of crowds. These descriptors include non-social features such as the number of individuals involved, the density of the population and the physical proximity of the participants, or temporal dimensions of crowd action, such as duration, frequency and rapidity. They also include social aspects, such as the social significance of some types of collective action, the effects of certain historical events upon the collective memory of the group, the degree of social structuring and organization of the crowd, and the norms that regulate the behavior of the individuals who form a crowd. Finally, the descriptors try to capture the psychological dimension of crowd phenomena, that is, the motivation for action of the crowd members, considered both in isolation and as parts of the crowd (Graumann, 1984).

In addition to these, one may also consider other criteria of differentiation, also used by the early crowd psychologists, such as the cognitive faculties that are taken to be primarily involved in and therefore responsible for the collective mindedness and action of each of these two types of crowds. This is not a new idea. In fact, it reflects a methodological habit that goes back to the 17th and 18th century custom of organizing the cognitive powers into a superior faculty (judgment, reason, the understanding) and an inferior one (sensibility, imagination, the lower faculty of desire). This hierarchy of the faculties provides an anthropological foundation for much of the moral and political theory of the time (as we learn from the work of Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, or Kant), which sought to distinguish between the modes of thinking, acting and social organization that are appropriate for a society based on rational bonds and the ones that suit an immature population that is only subject to the law of desire. When we apply this anthropological distinction to the study of crowds, the natural crowd will inevitably appear as an intuitive, imaginative, and projective form of social aggregation while the artificial crowd will generally match the ideal of rationality and reflectivity that is traditionally attributed to modern, structured societies. Thus, the natural crowd will be seen as merely reacting to external stimuli while the artificial crowd will be regarded as a form of voluntary subjection to the authority of self-imposed norms. The spontaneous crowd will appear as a unity of feeling while the organized crowd will be taken to represent a unity of willing. The natural crowd will express the power of unconscious desires, whereas the artificial crowd explains how this power is harnessed in institutionalized contexts of thinking and action.

However, if we focus on the social, psychological, and cognitive criteria of classification (as presented above), it would appear that the distinction between a natural and an artificial crowd can be distilled into a distinction between two kinds of groups based on two philosophically relevant criteria of differentiation. The first one refers to the kind of self- and group-regarding collective attitudes of the members of the group, or what Raimo Tuomela (2002, 2007) calls *we*-attitudes, which give the group a specific collective identity and the individual group members a social identity that is derived from the identity of the group. According to this criterion, natural crowds spontaneously generate an identity that is not based on identifiable prior collective attitudes but takes the shape of projections of future states of emotional satisfaction or gratification. These states are allegedly achieved in emotional discharges through collective action that make the solidarity of the crowd members physically palpable and their satisfaction psychologically immediate. In contrast, the artificial crowds are groups that already possess such an identity and in which all the individual members understand their membership and therefore their group identity in terms of *we*-attitudes.

Second, the behavior of the individual members who make up the artificial crowd is regulated by norms that each individual acknowledges as authoritative for the type of activity that is specific

to the reference group. In contrast, the behavior of the natural crowd appears to be normless (when in fact it is based in implicit norms), or based on ad-hoc rules that legitimize whatever the group happens to be doing. What makes norms authoritative for the artificial crowd is that they are derived from collective attitudes that define the identity of the group and the group identity of each of the group's members. The norms of the natural crowd, on the other hand, appear to be retroactively justificatory and thus non-regulative. As we shall see, in light of this second criterion of differentiation, the challenge for crowd psychology is twofold: to explain whether and how the behavior of natural crowds is grounded in norms of group identity that individuals internalize and act out as a result of their membership in artificial crowds; and to explain the kind of collective identity of the natural crowd in terms of we-attitudes that are grounded in the group identity of the artificial crowd.

The distinction between natural and artificial is further complicated by other, sociologically and philosophically more salient distinctions between crowd and mass and between the massified individual and mass society. This distinction is not easy to see in the work of Gabriel Tarde, for instance, who regards the artificial crowd as an instance of what he calls the public, a precursor notion to the Heideggerian idea of inauthentic "publicness" or to the concept of mass in the early critical theory of Adorno and Horkheimer. Clearly, the notion of a mass of individuals understood in this way is not reducible to the notion of a group, even though the mass includes many individuals who belong to such groups. This further means that the social mass cannot be understood as a crowd, whether natural or artificial, and conversely, that the crowd is not reducible to the mass. The notion of mass conveys the idea that the individuals who compose it are interchangeable. And they are deemed to be interchangeable because their personal and their group identity are fully dissolved in the impersonal and repeatable quantitative identity of a collection of atomized individuals. These individuals no longer possess the kind of distinctive personality features that motivate them to think of themselves as either autonomous or as participating in a group based on internalized we-attitudes that produce norms of action. As we learn from Marx' theory of alienation (and Lukács' theory of reification), the mass is the condition that characterizes individuals who possess no personal or group identity beyond the function identity they acquire in the process of satisfying needs in a social system that is designed to maintain itself by reproducing such identities. However, what is important about mass society is that the massified individuals who compose it are susceptible of engaging in the kind of collective action that is typical of natural crowds following the promptings of leaders who know how to generate the illusion that the action of the crowd is the expression of specific forms of group identity: class-based, national, racial, religious, etc.

Earlier I used the concept of identity without further qualifications. To address this lack of determinateness, one must first dis-

tinguish between individual or personal identity and group identity when analyzing crowds. But this distinction requires additional explanations. Philosophers and social psychologists who investigate the problem of identity tend to assume an individualistic notion of identity, which they often represent as a self-certifying source of theoretical and practical rationality. This notion of identity may include evaluative features that borrow from the social context of interaction without, however, being reducible to it. The early crowd psychology of Le Bon, McDougall or Park, just like the psychological theory of de-individuation of the late 60's and early 70's (Zimbardo, Diener, etc), argues that the personal identity of the individuals who participate in crowds is dissolved in the collective mental attitude of the crowd, or in the fusion of affects that produces something resembling a collective soul or affective spirit. The notion of identity used in this paper differs from the notion of identity used in such approaches. Drawing on Marx's early social theory, it insists that personal identity is a form of practical, as opposed to merely cognitive, self-relation. A practical self-relation actualizes, through recognition, self-regarding attitudes that are in turn based on interpretations of oneself in terms of the evaluative features one possesses. These features may be natural determinations such as attributes, skills, or capacities, as well as conscious value-orientations whose normative status is conferred by the evaluative framework of the reference group (ethnic, gendered, racial, life-style based, etc). Personal identity in this sense is doubly social even though it is not just a social construction. It requires the presence of evaluative features shared by the group, whose normative status is actualized through practical, as opposed to merely symbolic, attitudes of recognition by members of the in-group or the out-group. If we accept these qualifications, it would seem that what is at stake in crowd phenomena is not the dissolution of personal identity but the emphatic affirmation of group identity, a desire for the recognition of one's social identity. What is normative, then, is the group identity of the artificial crowd (as specified by the salient evaluative features), and the challenge is to explain natural crowds in terms of this normative potential.

Crowd Psychology as Natural Power Ontology

The crowd first shows up as a social philosophical problem in Hegel's mature social philosophy of mutual recognition (Hegel, 1992). But Hegel is unable to satisfactorily deal with the problem of what he calls the rabble mentality (the resentful attitude of the poor who reject the ethical norms of modern civil society yet feel entitled to its benefits), and so he decides to ignore it by treating it as a psychological aberration. There have been two, historically developed types of responses to Hegel's unsolved problem. One type of response, exemplified by Karl Marx and the Marxist tradition, emphasizes the need for a materialist reconstruction of the structures of subjectivity that would eventually result in a revolutionary type of social consciousness with which the rabble could properly identify. This type of consciousness could be granted

normative status in a radically revised system of recognition of one's species being. The other response, by Friedrich Nietzsche, reconfigures what the early Marx had called the "language of real life" in the form of a primordial unity of affectivity. This motivates individuals to engage in value-transcending forms of willing that undermine what Nietzsche criticized as "slave morality" or "herd mentality"--- the collective attitudes of mutual recognition in modern ethical life as described by Hegel. Unlike the first generation critical theorists, who tried to work out a synthesis of Marx and Freud (Nietzsche's heir), the crowd psychologists have followed Nietzsche.

After initially generating tremendous excitement, the early theories that aimed to capture the psychodynamic of crowd behavior quickly fell into disrepute. The reason for this is not very difficult to grasp. If we examine the work of Gustave Le Bon and Gabriel Tarde, the founders of this new, pseudo-scientific discipline, we immediately realize that their attempt to lay bare the natural foundations of what they called crowd psychology amounted to little more than an attempt to harness the motivational resources of an ontology of power relations in order to instrumentalize this ontology for socially and politically conservative purposes (Graumann & Moscovici, 1986, pp. 24-25). However, if we ignore this latter aspect, we would discover that for Le Bon all questions about the norms that govern the collective actions and attitudes of the social crowd must be answered in the terms provided by a neutral interpretation of what he took to be a natural phenomenon of human proximity. Here are some of the elements of this interpretation.

First, Le Bon believed that the mass represented a social entity of its own, a fusion of personalities in the spirit of the group which had to be distinguished not only from the individuals of which it is composed but also from (class-based) society. Crowd psychologists regarded the latter as a structured system of differences that could be objectively quantified according to socio-economic indicators and subjectively linked to ethical attitudes and dispositions. However, this system in their view lacked the psychological unity that could turn isolated individuals into impersonal units of a crowd. Unlike class society, which preserves class and therefore individual differences, the mass for Le Bon was a unitary mental phenomenon of collective life (Le Bon, 1952, p. 32). The mass' particular dynamism is grounded not in critical thinking and conscious reflection, but rather in the unconscious impulses of the collective, which make crowds susceptible to psychological influence and manipulation. The crowd is a unity of emotions whose motivational power is summoned by the power of the imagination, and the corresponding loss in individuality could only be accounted for by the categories of a new and autonomous discipline.

Le Bon's view that crowd and society are distinct social objects is supposedly confirmed by the direct psychological observation of crowd behavior. Crowd actions are almost never reducible to either class characteristics or ethical dispositions. As far as the

latter are concerned, according to Le Bon the crowd could be impulsive and inconsistent, violent and cruel, irrational and hysterical, and perhaps even mad. But it could also be heroic and generous. Against Scipio Sighele and other legal theorists who worked under the 19th century, bourgeois assumption that the crowd is always criminal, Le Bon forcefully argued that the irrationality of the crowd is neither criminal, nor immoral. Like a natural phenomenon, the destructive energy of the crowd is fundamentally amoral. The "madness" of the crowd, Le Bon claimed, was the direct effect of the contagion caused by the exacerbated suggestibility that almost always obtains under conditions of social proximity (what the psycho-sociologist Robert Park later called "crowding"). This, however, added nothing truly pathological to the illusions of the masses, no matter how the latter ended up expressing them (Graumann, 1984, p. 530). This was also an important step in Le Bon's attempt to classify crowd behavior as an autonomous and strictly psychological phenomenon that had little to do with moral norms, historical tendencies, social factors and economic conditions. The mass was not a class, although it could easily be mistaken for one, and it was not criminal, even though it often behaved violently.

Second, Le Bon described the links between the massified individuals who make up the crowd and their leader with the help of the notion of hypnosis. One of the common accounts of what it means to be part of a crowd is that the individuals who are immersed in it find themselves under the power of a spell. They behave as if they suffered from some kind of psychological intoxication (Le Bon, 1952, p. 31). The somnambulant state of the crowd is often compared to the trance of hypnotized patients. Those who observed Charcot's work in his hospital ward came away convinced that hypnotism revealed the existence of some primordial form of psychic life, an animal magnetism that could also account for the irrationalism, primitivism, and elemental behavior of the crowd. Le Bon was no different in this respect. What explained the difference between the normal individual and the individual who was a part of the crowd was precisely what explained the difference between the conscious individual and the hypnotized patient. In Le Bon's words, "[A]n individual immersed for some time in a crowd in action soon finds himself, either in consequence of the magnetic influence given out by the crowd, or from some other cause of which we are ignorant, in a special state, which much resembles the state of fascination in which the hypnotized individual finds himself in the hands of the hypnotiser" (Le Bon, 1952, p. 31) From this point on, hypnosis becomes the main model for explaining social action and reaction in crowd psychology (Moscovici, 1981, p. 88).

Third, according to Le Bon and his follower, Gabriel Tarde, what characterizes the mental life of the crowd is projection and automatic thinking. The former blurs the distinction between reality and representation through expectations that cannot be justified by the laws of natural causality or by rules of deductive reasoning. This accounts for the fact that the crowd mind is repetitive,

contradictory, illogical, and excessively dependent on the projective power of the imagination (Rouquette, 1994, pp. 68-84). This mode of thinking appeals to memory and suggestion, which makes the crowd susceptible to idealization and influence and thus to political manipulation. It was this realization that led Gabriel Tarde to gradually abandon in his work the kind of descriptive account of mass behavior that Le Bon favored in order to better focus on the psychology of the charismatic leader and the forms of communication that the leader employs to control the masses---either direct (through suggestion), or indirect (through mass communication and propaganda, a more sophisticated form of suggestion) (Tarde, 1910, p. 78). Communication and conversation for Tarde, that is, holding the attention of an audience and influencing someone's thoughts, have effects in modern societies that are similar to those of hypnosis in therapeutic relationships. Mass communication is therefore an agent of social leveling and mental uniformity that reduces individuals to automata that look just like Charcot's hypnotized patients. Ultimately, crowd phenomena for Tarde are psychological byproducts of mass communication and the best way to approach them is through a psychological investigation of communication patterns in modern societies.

The efforts of the early (and even later) crowd psychologists to preserve the methodological purity of their discipline, which is exemplified by the justified refusal to collapse the notion of mass into that of social class and the notion of crowd mentality into that of class consciousness, comes at a heavy price, particularly for an emerging science that claims to provide a more lucid account of modern political phenomena. The price is the lack of a normative horizon that could elevate crowd psychology above the status of a descriptive discipline that only deals with the mechanics, so to speak, of social action and collective mindedness. Crowd psychology may well generate exciting empirical theories, but these theories rarely deal with questions of normativity explicitly, even though everything about crowds appears to be normative.

Critical Theory and the Repression of the Psychological

This all changes with Freud and early Critical Theory. Freud in particular is important because he adopts the problematic, descriptions, and typologies of classical crowd psychology but provides a different ontological explanation for mass phenomena, one that critical social theorists could appropriate within the proper normative context. In his account, the natural crowd is reduced to a mode of manifestation of the artificial crowd and, if the manifestation is violent, to pathological processes of de-sublimation that are generated from within the artificial crowd. This further enables Freud to focus on the social psychology of the group as a conceptual stand-in for the more nebulous collective mind or psyche of the earlier crowd psychologists.

Three moves seem of particular importance in Freud's 1921 essay

Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, where he presents the essential ingredients of his crowd theory. First, after a careful analysis of Le Bon's book on crowd psychology, Freud concludes that Le Bon, in spite of his impressive description of mass mentality and action, ultimately fails to explain that "something" which unites the individuals in the group (Freud, 1959, p. 5). Suggestion and hypnosis themselves must be grounded in a more primordial instinctual nature, which Freud hoped to explore with the help of the notion of libido, the primitive form of pleasure that now replaces suggestion as the basic analytic tool in the study of mass phenomena. Freud therefore replaces suggestion and hypnosis as models which explain the collective mind of the group with libido, which itself becomes the explanans for the inner group attraction between the individual members and between these members and the leader of the group (Anzieu, 2001, p. 48). In his words, "Suggestion is a conviction which is not based upon perception and reasoning but upon an erotic tie" (Freud, 1959, p. 60). Hence, "Love relationships... constitute the essence of the group mind... A group is clearly held together by a power of some kind; and to what power could this feat be better ascribed than to Eros, which holds together everything in the world" (Freud, 1959, pp. 21-2, 23).

Second (and following Tarde), Freud concentrates on the study of artificial or organized crowds, particularly those that display strong hierarchical structures like the church and the army. These two are dissimilar social entities in which the emotional ties of quasi-erotic love connect the individual members of the group to each other and to the "leader" of the group (Freud, 1959, pp. 26-7). The disintegration of these two groups, on the other hand, reveals the absence of affection between their members, which liberates the emotional energies and instincts that were held in check by the love for the leader and for each other. The violence of the crowd, as in the fear and panic of the leaderless army or the "hostile impulses towards other people" in the rudderless church, signals the collapse of an authority structure that can no longer count on libidinal ties to support it (Freud, 1959, pp. 27, 30). Love is a civilizing factor in the evolution of humankind. The violent behavior of the crowd, on the other hand, is a regressive aspect that is generated by the lack of affectivity or its pathological perversion within already disintegrating social groups.

The libidinal organization of the group around its leader is further enabled by the process Freud calls identification, where an emotional tie to an object or to another ego that is elevated to the status of a model replaces the original libidinal object relationship (Freud, 1959, pp. 39-40). This, as well as idealization, where the object "serves as a substitute for some unattained ego ideal of our own" and thereby as a "means of satisfying our narcissism" (Freud, 1959, pp. 44-5), enables Freud to redefine hypnosis, the mechanism of group constitution in the crowd psychology of Le Bon, as the kind of love relationship from which sexual satisfaction is excluded. Here is Freud's formula for the libidinal constitution of the group: "A primary group of this kind is a number of

individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego" (Freud, 1959, p. 48).

Third, Freud seeks to link the explanation of crowd or mass psychology (which for him become interchangeable notions) to the understanding of the interpersonal relations that take root in much narrower proto-social circles, such as the "primal horde." The "primordial social instinct" of crowd psychology---the herd instinct or the group mind, a prominent category in Nietzsche's own power psychology---is in fact a more primitive instinct that occasionally surfaces in de-sublimated forms when the proper social and inter-personal conditions are met (Freud, 1959, pp. 2-3). The primal horde is also a form of group organization around a dominating male figure: "The primal father is the group ideal, which governs the ego in place of the ego ideal" (Freud, 1959, p. 59). The analysis of the mass psychology of Nazism by Fromm (1941) and Reich (1970) or that of the American fascist agitators by Lowenthal (1987) is largely based on this type of speculation. The psychological cohesion of the organized German masses and the violence and destructiveness through which they affirmed their group identity can be understood in terms of libido, repression and desublimation, as well as on the basis of the narcissistic identification with the ego and group ideal---the Führer. From this standpoint, Fascism is "not simply the reoccurrence of the archaic but its reproduction in and by civilization itself" (Adorno, 1991, p. 118).

The application of general psychoanalytic theory to crowd phenomena allowed Freud and his followers to expand his original analysis to the forms of cultural expression of historically evolved groups and to the socio-economic conditions of modern life that facilitate the emergence of crowd phenomena. It is on this ground that psychoanalysis meets Critical Theory. Adorno, for instance, in his influential essay, *Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda*, clearly identifies the potential of crowd psychology to function as a propaedeutic to a more general theory of pathological socialization: "According to Freud, the problem of mass psychology is closely related to the new type of psychological affliction so characteristic of the era which for socio-economic reasons witnesses the decline of the individual and his subsequent weakness" (Adorno, 1991, pp. 116). Adorno's entire essay can be seen as an attempt to spell out the psychological mechanisms that enable the socio-economic systems of the modern world to exert their power of domination through what Adorno calls the culture industry. For Adorno, fascism (a pathological expression of such systems) and mass culture are just two different facets of the same underlying phenomenon: "[The fascists' and the agitators'] effectiveness is itself a function of the psychology of the consumers. Through a process of 'freezing,' which can be observed throughout the techniques employed in modern mass culture, the surviving appeals have been standardized, similarly to the advertising slogans which proved to be the most valuable in the promotion of business" (Adorno, 1991, p. 128). Fascist propaganda, Adorno

argues, "simply takes men for what they are: the true children of today's standardized mass culture..." (Adorno, 1991, p. 129).

These quotations make it relatively clear that Adorno---and, following Adorno, Marcuse (Marcuse, 1998, pp. 53-5)---saw crowd psychology as the surface manifestation and symptom of some deeper reaching forces of regression to which it could also be ultimately reduced. The culture industry and the psychological homogenization of individuals in large-scale, undifferentiated groups are two aspects of the same power of domination whose goal is to forestall the emancipation of individuals by preventing the emergence of practical rationality and autonomy. This is achieved by turning the capacity for individual reflection and critique into a reflexively constituted habit of responding to external commands. Adorno makes this point very forcefully: "The so-called psychology of fascism is largely engendered by manipulation. Rationally calculated techniques bring about what is naively regarded as the 'natural' irrationality of masses. This insight may help us to solve the problem of whether fascism as a mass phenomenon can be explained at all in psychological terms.... Although the fascist agitator doubtlessly takes up certain tendencies within those he addresses, he does so as the mandatory of powerful economic interests. Psychological dispositions do not actually cause fascism; rather, fascism defines a psychological area which can be successfully exploited by the forces which promote it for entirely non-psychological reasons of self-interest.... Psychology has become one element among others in a superimposed system the very totality of which is necessitated by the potential mass of resistance---the masses' own rationality" (Adorno, 1991, p. 120).

We can easily see here that for Adorno psychology and psychoanalysis could only identify the subjective, superficial side of the crowd phenomenon, whose objective dimension they ultimately fail to grasp because these disciplines explain the attitudes and actions of the masses in terms of processes of influence and suggestion as opposed to infra- and super-structural normative pressures: "What happens when masses are caught by fascist propaganda is not a spontaneous primary expression of instincts and urges"---as the crowd psychologists and Freud essentially argued---"but a quasi-scientific revitalization of their psychology---the artificial regression described by Freud in his discussion of organized groups" (Adorno, 1991, p. 130). This notion is a precise match to Adorno's argument about massification through culture. Fascist manipulation has in common with mass culture the "synthetic production of modes of behavior," as he claims in *The Schema of Mass Culture* (Adorno, 1991, p. 78). "The totality of mass culture," he says, "culminates in the demand that no one can be any different from itself" (Adorno, 1991, p. 79). Furthermore, "mass culture assiduously concerns itself with the production of those archetypes in whose survival fascistic psychology perceives the most reliable means of perpetuating the modern conditions of domination" (Adorno, 1991, p. 80). The result is, as Adorno argues in *Culture Industry Reconsidered*, that the "power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced

consciousness” (Adorno, 1991, p. 90). Or, as the point is made in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: “[This] mentality... is part of the system, not an excuse for it... Individuals must use their general satiety as a motive for abandoning themselves to the collective power of which they are sated” (Adorno, 2002, pp. 96, 123).

This type of explanation leaves little room, if any, for crowd psychology as a discipline that has anything meaningful to say that is not already said, much better, by the critical theory of the power structures of late capitalism and of the normative orders that are implicit in these structures. It also rejects the distinction between natural and artificial crowds. The phenomena typically associated with the spontaneous and occasionally violent behavior of the natural crowd are now presented as a regression to nature that is the effect of social unlearning in mass society. This is an instance of de-individuation through cultural infantilization that responds to the strategic demands for control in the self-reproducing systems of the modern world. This message is reinforced by Adorno’s approach in the *The Authoritarian Personality*, where the investigation of personality types, based on quantitative studies that for the most part rely on a psychoanalytic scheme of interpretation, is always pursued with a view to exposing the underlying social and economic forces that produced them in the first place (Adorno, 1982, pp. 295, 349, Lowenthal, 1987, p. 6). At this point, the sociological analysis of the process of rationalization of modern society has the upper hand, while the psychological component that prevailed in earlier crowd psychology is almost completely eliminated under the pressures exerted by the tremendous explicative appetite of critical social theory.

Crowd Psychology and Misrecognition

We have seen so far that crowd psychology fails to support its remarkable descriptive efforts with the proper conceptual infrastructure that could explain the normative dimension of mass phenomena. Critical Theory, on the other hand, is so successful in addressing this latter aspect in terms of a theory of pathological social rationalization that it ends up pushing all questions of psychology into the background. In the following I try to present, however summarily, an alternative approach that could incorporate both dimensions through a discussion of some aspects of Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition and identity formation which normatively grounds crowd attitudes and behaviour in psychological experiences of moral suffering. In this respect, Honneth can be seen as also trying to re-actualize a forgotten dimension of Marx’s early social philosophy.

Honneth is highly critical of the sociologism of early Critical Theory. According to Honneth, “[T]he price to pay for concentrating on the developmental logic of instrumental reason consists in two limitations in the theoretical field.... For one, this approach excludes any factors that do not stand in a more or less direct relation to the process of technical rationalization in the histori-

cal process in which totalitarianism emerges. Thus as much as Horkheimer and Adorno take account of developments such as the mass media, and as much as they take pains to account for psychic dispositions, their analysis of these events is always limited to discovering only further forms of a totalitarian forms of reason” (Honneth, 2007, p. 30). This lack of psychological depth and anthropological richness in early Critical Theory is the reason why Honneth develops an alternative account of social pathologies in terms of a theory of recognition. The critical standpoint of this theory is provided by a phenomenological analysis of the experience of moral injury, which seeks to uncover the normative potential of intersubjective identity formation by examining the psychological experiences of misrecognized individuals.

But what is recognition? Elsewhere I proposed the following definition (based on a loose reconstruction of Honneth’s ideas): “Recognition designates the socially situated and historically evolving inter-subjective attitudes that institute normative statuses by means of practices through which agents offer and accept identity claims.” (Neculau, forthcoming) Misrecognition on the other hand means attributing or granting normative status to evaluative features that an individual either does not claim or does not possess at the expense of evaluative features that individuals do possess and claim. Individuals experience this as a form of suffering or as an injury to one’s attempts at successful self-realization, which makes misrecognition a contributing factor to social fragmentation (Sloterdijk, 2000). If the non-recognized or misrecognized individuals cannot develop an identity, either personal or group-based, they will be prone to finding compensation for this identity deficit in psychological experiences of violent collective action of the type that are often attributed to the natural crowd. In his writings, Honneth uncovers three types of moral injury and misrecognition that, when properly analyzed, can lead one to discover three types of positive relations to the self (or three forms of identity): self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. Each of these types of self-relation or identity is partially constituted by three matching practical attitudes of mutual acknowledgment: love, respect and solidarity (Honneth, 1992, pp. 190-191). The socially more relevant forms of misrecognition are disrespect---as in the denial of legal rights---and the lack of social esteem---as in the refusal to grant normative status to evaluative features individuals acquire or develop in the process of acculturation and group socialization. As mentioned in the first section, these features either display an orientation to value or reflect natural characteristics and abilities whose worth is explainable in terms of value: race, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, work skills, etc.

What could Honneth’s theory of recognition do to advance the study of crowd phenomena along the lines suggested in the first section of this paper? My proposal is that we understand the forms of collective behavior that match Le Bon’s description of the natural crowd as a pathological form of group socialization which, instead of affirming the autonomy of socially integrated

individuals (that is, their individual and group identity), reduces them, based on the selective recognition of certain kinds of evaluative features, to the status of undifferentiated members of groups that are exclusively structured around such features. This occurs when type-specific attitudes of recognition that lead to a differentiated form of practical relation to the self are replaced by the disproportionate and perhaps also rhetorically enhanced symbolic recognition of some limited dimension of one's personality, which amounts to misrecognition. (Needless to say, the whole story is a bit more complicated than that. For individual identity, the kind that is socially or politically relevant, always comes in the shape of an instantiation of group identity, and a more developed account would have to cover both these dimensions as well as their interplay). Thus crowd phenomena, hitherto described in pure psychological terms or in terms of underlying socio-economic distortions, could be explained as collectively experienced forms of moral injury, which signal the underlying presence of some distorted, pathological forms of recognition (or misrecognition) of evaluative features. If we accept this suggestion, the normative dimension of a critical theoretical approach to crowd phenomena would be anchored in psychological experiences of injury caused by the misrecognition of evaluative features, while the analysis of the psychological dimension of crowd behavior would indicate the presence of frustrated normative expectations. This, of course, would eliminate the distinction between natural and artificial crowds and explain the spontaneous behavior and the collective mindedness (that is, the self-regarding attitudes that confer group identity) of any type of socially or politically relevant type of crowd in terms of responses to such normative attitudes of misrecognition.

The theory of recognition also helps explain how experiences of moral injury can be mobilized in the pursuit of social and political causes. The solidarity of a group that is offered in compensation for an affective loss or in response to the moral indignation that is elicited by the withdrawal or refusal of rights, or the emotional comfort of membership in a radical group that is accorded those who feel socially stigmatized strike me as some of the most salient examples of politically instrumentalized misrecognition in the current North-American context. Other examples are the political use of nationalist or religious rhetoric. To offer such compensatory forms of recognition is the job of the hypnotist, group leader, Führer or agitator, those who know how to exploit existing feelings of moral injury and use them to turn the largely inert, "massified" individuals into members of "natural" and "spontaneous," that is, politically active, crowds.

On the other hand, the notion of moral injury, when paired with the criterion of reciprocity in recognition (which must be understood as a formal criterion of achieving a fully developed social identity), also allows one to distinguish between morally qualified experiences of human suffering and experiences that are not based on the actual misrecognition of existing or legitimate evaluative features. Given that a relationship that is not transitive (or

reciprocal) cannot be reflexive, an attitude of recognition that is not reciprocated cannot lead to a positive relation to oneself, that is, to the emergence of a fully developed identity. Misrecognition--that is, the attribution of inexistent or normatively indifferent evaluative features at the expense of normatively relevant ones--always prevents the emergence of such an identity by reducing it to some limitative type of evaluative feature. And, given that no form of misrecognition can be universalized (or at least generalized across all group boundaries), it follows that reciprocity of recognition can also function as a criterion for determining which types of violent collective action are based in experiences of moral injury (say, revolutions and liberation movements) and which are not (cases of political oppression or common criminal violence).

Is there some empirical basis for such philosophical speculations on the role of identity misrecognition in generating the norms that explain crowd psychology? Research conducted in social psychology over the past decades seems to confirm this hypothesis. In the early seventies, several theories offered competing but in several respects also complementary explanations for the type of phenomena that fascinated the early crowd psychologists. One of these is de-individuation theory, which, in its various versions, is premised on the notion that the loss of private and public self-awareness in the crowd leaves us unrestrained by norms (Zimbardo, 1969, Diener, 1980). Another theory is emergent norm theory, according to which the behavior of large, crowd-like groups is governed by norms that somehow emerge from the complicated webs of interaction of the crowd members, following patterns of interaction that are laid down by exemplary individuals called keynoters (Turner & Killian, 1972). Another approach was inspired by rational choice theories, according to which what appears to be the spontaneous action of the group is ultimately grounded in the preliminary normative consensus that is achieved as a result of the gradual cognitive convergence of individuals who make choices that maximize payoff based on the perceived support of the group (Berk, 1974). A fourth approach is based in self-categorization or social identity theory. On this view, crowds are norm-based groups that act out their group identity, and the challenge is to reconstitute this identity out of the multiple clues provided by the empirical analysis of the individual and group identifiers that may explain the collective motivations of the crowd members.

Each of these theories captures some essential aspect of the crowd phenomenon while at the same time failing to provide a compelling comprehensive explanation that properly accounts for the group or crowd norms. The first type of theory explains crowd behavior at the price of making it normless. Emerging-norm theories cannot establish a plausible link between the norms embodied or invoked by the keynoters and those that are supposed to emerge directly from the crowd. Rational choice theories rule out the impact of values that go beyond individual utility, while earlier versions of self-categorization theory have a difficult time explaining

social change without already locating the motivation for change in the group identity that the crowd is supposed to act out. On this view, violent groups are violent because they express norms of violent behavior that are part of the group identity, whereas non-violent groups express non-violent types of identity. The most promising of all these approaches is Stephen Reicher's version of the social identity theory (what he calls the Elaborated Social Identity Model of crowd behavior, or ESIM), which comes very close to capturing all the major points of Honneth's conception of recognition (Reicher, 2001). According to this model, crowd action, especially in its violent variety, is governed by norms that are traceable to miscategorization (or misidentification) by the crowd antagonist: police, government, prominent representatives of the opposing social class, ethnic or racial group, etc. These are norms of misrecognition that generate an ad-hoc, reactive solidarity, which is the likely source for the collective attitudes and actions of the individuals whose existing group identity is either violently reaffirmed as a result of misrecognition, or spontaneously created out of disparate and often even incompatible prior identifications. Either way, Reicher's research, and especially his detailed analysis of the 1980 riot of St Pauls Bristol, provide ample empirical confirmation for my attempt to use Honneth's theory of identity recognition to account for the normative foundations of crowd psychology.

In this paper I have tried to formulate a norm-based explanation of the relationship between artificial and natural crowds that is motivationally grounded in psychological experiences of identity recognition and misrecognition. The idea here is that the apparently normless behavior of the so-called natural crowd is a response to practical attitudes of misrecognition. The response makes explicit an implicit appeal to group identities that are already normatively articulated. The paper develops this idea by means of a historical reconstruction of some important moments within the Marxist tradition. The implied claim in this reconstruction is that Axel Honneth's theory of recognition can help us retrieve a psychological and anthropological dimension of social critique that goes back to the early writings of Marx.

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