

For a Reading of Lordship and Bondage: The Genesis of Practical Reason as a Way to Hegel's First Philosophy

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Abstract

In the following essay I shall propose a reading of Lordship and Bondage that follows what Robert Pippin termed a ‘practical turn’ (Pippin 2011: 28). I shall further argue that this turn ought to be qualified as Hegel’s first philosophy. Starting with a reading that evinces the connection between the practical achievement of Self-Consciousness and the notion of Spirit as exhibiting a concentric relation, Spirit will be revealed to have its centre in the practical achievement of Self-Consciousness. I will then offer a commentary on the notion of a complex desideratum as a way of attaining the concept of desire at work in the *Phenomenology*. The commentary will show that Hegel frames the satisfaction of this desire as a distinctive problem that will in turn necessitate a proper practical solution. This leads us to the implicit critique of contractualism, that may—in the terms of Hegel’s argument—function as an impediment to the proper philosophical understanding of reciprocity. To conclude I shall propose a reading within the intrasubjective family of readings. We will find that the critique of both contractualism and the apprehension of the complex desideratum offers us the rationale for interpreting the peculiar absence of fear in Hegel’s allegory of life-and-death struggle. I shall offer a detailed reading of the Lord and Bondsman trope and interpret these two figures as two aspects of one self-conscious individual in the process of apprehending their practical nature, thus making explicit a tripartite structure of practical self-consciousness. This will be suggested as the solution to the initial orectic problem and the beginning of an argument towards the practical attainment of Spirit.

I. Introduction

In the following essay I shall propose a reading of Lordship and Bondage that follows what Robert Pippin termed a ‘practical turn’ (2011: 28). I shall further argue that this practical turn ought to be qualified as implying what I will define as Hegel’s ‘first philosophy’.



I will begin with a reading that evinces the connection between the practical achievement of Self-Consciousness and the final constitution of Spirit as exhibiting a concentric relation—i.e. that Spirit will be revealed to have its centre in the practical achievement of self-conscious individuals and that this is relevantly anticipated in Lordship and Bondage. I will then offer a commentary on the notion of a complex desideratum as a way of attaining the concept of desire at work in the *Phenomenology*. This commentary will show that Hegel frames the satisfaction of this peculiar desire as a distinctive problem that will in turn necessitate a proper practical solution—hence, the genesis of practical reasoning. This argument shall lead us to the implicit critique of contractualism, which may (in the terms of Hegel's argument) function as an impediment to the proper philosophical understanding of reciprocity.

Finally, I shall offer a detailed reading of the Lord and Bondsman trope and interpret these two figures as two aspects of *one* self-conscious individual in the process of apprehending his or her *practical nature*, thus making explicit a tripartite structure of practical self-consciousness. I will read the figure of the Lord as the deliberative aspect of Self-Consciousness and the Bondsman as the instrumentality of the same Self-Consciousness. Following this initial characterization I will provide a close reading of the steps Hegel takes to show the unity of these two notions as constituting the possibility of individual practical identity and concomitantly the genuine possibility of reciprocity, providing argument enough against a mere formal notion of personhood. I will offer a reading of the three notions employed by Hegel: servitude, work and formative activity. This reading will lead us to the appreciation of the self-constitution of integral personality, which qualifies the initial orrectic problem and functions as the beginning of an argument towards the practical attainment of Spirit.

II. Contextualization of the argument

To begin, I shall propose a reading of Lordship and Bondage within the 'intrasubjective' family of readings¹—that is, I shall follow John McDowell's suggestion (2013: 161–65) that a reading of Lordship and Bondage has to account for the *intrasubjective* character of the argument (2013: 161). However, I believe that McDowell's reading does not properly account for the notion of *desire* at work in the text. Robert Pippin has persuasively tackled this oversight up to a point (2011: 13–14). Nonetheless, I would like to extract a further consequence: by not being able to account for the complexity of the desideratum—i.e. that self-consciousness finds satisfaction only in another self-consciousness—McDowell's argument is not capable of understanding the genesis of practical reasoning which, as I shall argue, is the proper subject of Lordship and

Bondage. As I will show, desire (*überhaupt*) is not simply indicative of a form of generality for negating otherness through consumption (McDowell 2013: 155); importantly, it is that the complexity of desire shows Self-Consciousness that his final desideratum cannot indiscriminately and monotonously be treated as a mere object of consumption and thus requires practical reasoning in order to address other persons as equally independent beings. Hence, my reading shall provide evidence for what Hyppolite termed the double task of the *Phenomenology*: to show individual self-conscious human beings the possibility of reconciliation in the form of Spirit, i.e. to apprehend reciprocity in the first person (1979: 321).²

Before commenting further on this notion of reconciliation, it is necessary to make an additional point concerning Pippin's reading. Although I do agree with his reading of the text as evincing a *practical turn*, I do not believe his argument provides all the relevant evidence for this very notion of practicality. I shall argue, furthermore, that this evidence is indispensable to understanding the project of the *Phenomenology*. Pippin is correct in claiming that Hegel's text does not support McDowell's paraphrase of the 'struggle to the death' as a mere allegory (Pippin 2011: 28). He is also correct in assuming that at this stage of the argument—contrary to McDowell's interpretation³—what Spirit *is*, is already anticipated (*vorhanden*). Nevertheless, I shall put forward that the proper argument for the practical anticipation of Spirit is to be found in the *intrasubjective* tripartite structure of the Lord and Bondsman trope: i.e. servitude, work and formative activity. Thus, we arrive at this argument via the description of an *intersubjective* problem—that is, the initial failure of a self-conscious individual (because practical reasoning is *in absentia*) to comprehend another self-conscious individual. Hence, I shall argue that the proper appreciation of the *practical turn* implies the apprehension of the concentric structure of Lordship and Bondage. The initial moment of Lordship and Bondage builds up to an *intersubjective* problem: self-consciousness desires another self-consciousness, but without practical reason this desire results in failure. Failure, as the death of the other, will precipitate Self-Consciousness into its *intrasubjective* realm where it will finally apprehend the relation between reflection, self-constitution, and reciprocal recognition of others. This apprehension is the anticipation of Spirit as the possibility of reconciliation amongst self-conscious individual persons.⁴

Hegel anticipates the theme of reconciliation at the end of 'Force and the Understanding'. I will flesh out the inherently normative and practical idea contained in this material, since Hegel recalls this theme via an explicit comparison at the beginning of Lordship and Bondage. This notion of reconciliation—that is, the apprehension in the first person of human nature through reflection, and consequently the recognition of other persons as belonging to the same nature—shall be described in the argument that follows as Hegel's 'first philosophy'. I shall use this term in the sense that the argument presented to us in the

Phenomenology implies a definition of human nature (the *in-itself*)—the *rationale* behind Self-Consciousness is desire (*überhaupt*)—that has to be shown to the reader in the form of a phenomenological reflection (the *for-itself*).⁵

Hegel's first philosophy is distinctively non-dualistic, in the qualified sense that it reinterprets the complex function of human desire as requiring practical reason as the source of a hierarchy amongst desires, as well as the principal of self-constitution of individual persons, and finally, as the condition of the possibility of reciprocal recognition of other self-constituting self-conscious persons.⁶ For this reason, at the opening of 'Lordship and Bondage', Hegel attempts a critique of a Hobbesian form of contractualism, which amounts to (in Hegelian terms) a false picture of human nature.⁷

I shall argue that this critique of the Hobbesian picture of human nature, with its concomitant contractualism, and the apprehension of the complex desideratum combine to offer us the rationale for interpreting the conspicuous absence of fear in Hegel's allegory of life-and-death struggle.⁸ The absence of fear is thus representative of a Hobbesian reversal. In other words, while fear in the Hobbesian account remains the sole motor of human action, Hegel will attempt to recover practical reasoning as the proper motor for action, reinterpreting fear *as respect* for a deliberative, rational exercise. It is relevant that we appreciate Hegel's rhetorical choice for couching this important idea in a Hobbesian vocabulary; Hegel rescues the notion of fear from the circumstantial and particularistic use we find in Hobbes and applies it to fear *as respect* before the deliberative act, personalized in the allegorical figure of the Lord, as the beginning of wisdom.⁹ It is only after a proper interpretation of this notion of wisdom that we can speak about a *practical turn*, since it is only at the end of 'Lordship and Bondage' that Hegel concludes his argument concerning the practical nature of Self-Consciousness.

III. The concentric structure of the argument: the intersubjective problem and the intrasubjective requirement

It is helpful to imagine the material contained in 'Lordship and Bondage' as forming two concentric circles. The reason for this suggestion is not merely for ease, but rather to make a philosophical point explicit: *Geist*, though different from Self-Consciousness, shares the same centre—namely, the self-conscious individual person.

The relationship between both circles can be tentatively described as a representation of the relationship between reciprocal recognition (i.e. the 'intersubjective' problem) and self-recognition *as* self-constitution (i.e. the 'intrasubjective' requirement)—that is, only individuals who have grasped the notion of *self-constitution* are able to understand other individuals in turn as *self-constituting*

themselves. This process of reciprocal recognition will issue in *Geist* as concrete freedom.¹⁰

Hegel introduces the figures of Lord and the Bondsman with an important qualification regarding the concept of recognition. One self-conscious individual is *in and for itself* only when it is recognized by another as being *in and for itself* (*PbG*: ¶178).¹¹ At the outset, this qualification is meant to exclude the brutal unresolved desire represented in the life-and-death struggle, but also purely formal, non-philosophical, or contractual forms of recognition.

This full-blooded sense of recognition implies that a self-conscious individual must apprehend his own self-constituting nature—that is, how he becomes through his own acting in order to reciprocally apply this knowledge of what he is *in and for itself* to another self-conscious individual. Hegel will actually provide a phrase for the achievement of reciprocal recognition, later in the ‘Actualization of rational self-consciousness through its own activity’: ‘I perceive in all of them the fact that *they know themselves to be* only these independent beings, just as *I am*’ (*PbG*: ¶351). Following this, the first-personal requirement for full-blooded reciprocal recognition should be addressed—namely, that they have the same kind of knowledge of their independence, which is to say, the concrete freedom that I also have.

Hegel calls this capacity to know oneself *as self-constituting oneself freely* the concept of the ‘unity of self-consciousness in its duplication’. This notion of duplication¹² represents the duplication of Self-Consciousness into two singular aspects that constitute its nature: the Lord (or one’s deliberative capacity) and the Bondsman (one’s instrumental capacity). The unity of these two aspects represents an autonomous agent—that is, one who is capable of acting in accordance with one’s ends. The development of the concept of unity of the will issues in the possibility of accounting for shared ends that independent agents recognize as reasonable—namely, as a form of compatibilism between concrete personal freedom (not abstract self-sufficiency) and the dependence that consists in sharing ends that are naturally collective (but that do not override the individual). This latter aspect is extremely important. It implies a sort of *reflexive-distance* between individuals that Hegel describes as a form of *opposition* in one of his anticipatory and tentative definitions of Spirit: ‘this absolute substance which, *in their opposition*, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: “I” that is “We” and “We” that is “I”’ (*PbG*: ¶177).

There are two textual moments where Hegel describes the concentric structure of his argument as a way of attaining what he calls the *pure concept of recognition* (*PbG*: ¶185) and what has been suggested here as the full-blooded sense of reciprocal recognition for which his argument strives. First, Hegel is careful to point out that, given the shortcomings of a merely formal way of accounting for reciprocal recognition, one must note ‘how the duplication of self-consciousness in its oneness, appears to self-consciousness’ (*PbG*: ¶185). This passage suggests a particular

mode of presentation: the need to attain the cognitive gain in the first person that will allow—in the constructed *gedankenexperiment* of the life-and-death struggle—a concrete form of resolution. Hegel is clearly aware of the difficulty of the subject and the form of the presentation. He begins by suggesting that the varied moments of this philosophical gain must be kept apart without forgetting that the end of this first-personal cognitive gain is the proper revelation of the social nature of reason.

Second, Hegel describes the two opposed shapes of consciousness—independent and dependent—as existing *before* a unity has been achieved through *reflection* right at the introduction of the Lord and Bondsman section (*PbG*: ¶189). The requirement for this first-personal reflection is brought about by the patent failure of the life-and-death struggle to give a proper moral and existential satisfaction before the complex *desire* of one self-conscious individual for another self-conscious individual. The gain that Hegel motivates, which will give Self-Consciousness the necessary materials for satisfying its desire, demands the tripartite structure represented in the Lord-Bondsman trope. Both *recognition-of-the-Lord* and *work* are essential to the reality of an actual person. This reflection will make it possible for Self-Consciousness to face another Self-Consciousness without treating it as a mere object, as is the case in the life-and-death struggle.

IV. The apprehension of the complex desideratum

IV.i. Fluidity: repression and submission: orectic solipsism

The stage is now set for a different kind of problem. Self-Consciousness cannot disappear within the reality it comprehends. In order to stand the ground of its independent willing within the vast flux of life, Self-Consciousness will have to enter the totality of life in order to understand the threshold of dependence on the world and others around him. In essence, Self-Consciousness will have to comprehend what kinds of *ends* it can have, and how it can give these ends a *practical reality*. Self-Consciousness has to give itself reality and preserve itself within the totality of life, which Hegel calls *fluidity*—that is, the autotelic circular movement of biological life. Therefore, it will apprehend itself as an individual life, which will imply a distinct kind of movement, a prospective movement or a teleology.

This prospective aspect can be found first in the phrase: ‘life points to something other than itself, to consciousness, for which Life exists as this unity, or as genus’ (*PbG*: ¶172). Life *as genus* is being rescued here from the immediacy of simple biology. Avoiding this simplicity affords consciousness the understanding of the prospective character of Life as it points to something other than the mere preservation of biological life, as the *genus* common to its several species. An intuition concerning Spirit is already at work here, but this intuition still has to be understood in

consonance with the proper derivation of the concept of *end*, since there is a distinction between the *anticipation* of Spirit and its constitution—that is, the delineation of compatibility between life and deliberation that points away from its immediacy. This latter thought is, of course, a paraphrase of the idea that Self-Consciousness will learn: ‘life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness’ (*PbG*: ¶189).

Hegel is careful to present the concept of desire as possessing two different aspects, like two sides of the same coin. Therefore, the argument begins with the enumeration of these two moments, that are, at this particular stage of the argument, rendered as a kind of *orectic solipsism*. These two moments are a way of working the notion of *self-preservation* into the proper conception of desire that includes other individuals as essential to this peculiar form of *preservation*. In other words, it is Hegel once again pointing out the fact that to attain the notion of Spirit is to apprehend our reciprocal nature. Nevertheless, this first characterization of *self-preservation* is minimal.

Hegel describes the initial position of Self-Consciousness, upon entering life, as a form of *repression* (*Unterdrückung*) of the diremption caused by having desires directed towards something that is *other*—for example, consider the paradigmatic case of satisfying hunger.

This initial position, however, is unstable. It will not afford Self-Consciousness any permanence (*Bestehen*) (*PbG*: ¶171) as someone, or as forming the world and itself. Consider hunger and the apple, this would be equivalent to hunger being repressed by the destruction of the eaten apple; thus, like the eaten apple, the feeling of hunger no longer exists. Of course, the *flux of life* remains at arm’s length, since the feeling of hunger is recurrent and with it is the basic structure of desire (i.e. the desire and the object it consumes). The repetition of this simple form of repression is, nevertheless, untenable, even at a basic level of desire, since it has no prospective direction. The constant attempt to suppress this diremption will conclude only with the cessation of *this* individual life. Movement here has a *monotonous* aspect: it is the incessant satisfaction of natural emerging desires that cause change in the individual who preserves itself, relating to the world only through *consumption*.¹³ This monotony is far from the notion of *satisfaction* Hegel wants to define, since basic consumption implies a sort of negation and destruction irreconcilable with reciprocity, which is the proper *genus* of life for a person (*satisfaction in another self-consciousness* (*PbG*: ¶175)).

The argument thus introduces a further specification, the notion of *forming* (*gestalten*), which possesses both prospection and a practical direction of fit towards the world. This specification will, in turn, afford the proper connection between enduring permanence and satisfaction; and this nexus is the first, albeit dim, intuition of a teleologically structured activity.

Hence, the following moment is a form of *submission* (*Unterwerfung*). Self-Consciousness will have to position itself within the continuity of the process of life, which in turn, as *otherness*, includes all and everything, *in order to* become an

individual—that is, to become someone or, as Hegel puts it at this reductive level, *a member*. This peculiar act of *forming*, which characterizes the act of *submission* is no longer the mere immediate *being moved* by, say, hunger in order to repress it. Now it assumes the guise of a form of production that submits, for example, the original form of the flesh of an animal to the form of a given cut of meat. Submission in this way allows individuality to consume the whole of nature in an act of self-preservation, as a possible permanent system of *satisfaction of desires*. *Submission* is therefore the act by which Self-Consciousness is described as comprehending the nexus of the process of life as a whole and individual life as a movement dependent upon and continuous with the entire process of life.

In other words, this argument amounts to a first intuition of Spirit as placed within nature. It is a qualification of the preservation of life as demanding prospection and not merely an *arbitrium brututum*. Hegel is, at this moment of the argument, anticipating something like a *practical impingement* for Self-Consciousness: the *motionless tautology* ‘*I am I*’ (PbG: ¶167) unfolds in the sphere of life, as Hegel puts it, and points to *something other than itself* (PbG: ¶177)—that is, to something *future-directed* and outside of the mere immediacy of repression.

At this stage, Self-Consciousness has made a substantial gain. The initial dir-emption between Self-Consciousness and fluidity, described as a *passive* separating out (PbG: ¶171), has now led to the intuition of *independence* through the future-directed act of submission. This is to say that Self-Consciousness knows that it shapes nature; thus it submits nature to a particular form in order to survive.

At the conclusion of the movement of *submission*, Hegel introduces an important qualification: the individual keeps itself alive, as Hegel says, *at the expense* of nature. This is how it affords the *feeling*¹⁴ of a self-given unity (PbG: ¶171). This feeling of a self-given unity is a variant of a kind of *orectic solipsism*. This is because the complex *desideratum* that will include other Self-Conscious individuals—the *satisfaction in another Self-Consciousness*—cannot be sustained *at the expense* of others like Self-Consciousness. Of course, it is precisely in this solipsistic mode that Self-Consciousness will first meet another equally independent Self-Consciousness in a life-and-death struggle. The reason for this fight is that neither has the proper self-knowledge of their self-constitution, which will issue in the reciprocal mode of knowing each other as independent. Therefore, they *are moved* to each other by a desire for each other, which they try to resolve on the model of *submission* just described—that is, by trying to make *satisfaction* permanent (a permanence which will eventually only be attained through *work*).

IV.ii. *Loss of uniqueness and projection: the derivation of reflexive-distance*

The previous section uncovers the non-immediacy of the concept of desire. It begins with an account of its etiology, but does not reduce it to that particular

etiology. Even as the mechanism of *submission* approaches a proper teleology, it is still blind with respect to relevant differences in its objects.

It is evident that this blindness is an impediment to the apprehension of Spirit. Self-Consciousness has to go beyond the simple difference of itself as desiring and an object of desire. It will be driven by an orectic pull, not only to a mere object of consumption, but to others like itself. Hegel describes this movement as a kind of loss of uniqueness. The significance of this loss is tremendous: Self-Consciousness must step outside its immediate relationship with life, consequently leaving behind the unsatisfactory orectic solipsism.¹⁵

Hegel will now begin to conceptualize the identity behind the idea of *another Self-Consciousness*. In this sense, this loss is the acknowledgment of others like oneself, even though the proper conception of another self-conscious individual is inaccessible at this stage of the argument. Hence this sort of loss is initially a structural requirement for the presence of others of the same kind, even though the materials needed to impose a rational limit upon an unfettered vicarious apprehension have not been determined yet.

Hegel divides the apprehension of another self-conscious individual into particular phases. Let me begin by both identifying these textually and offering a gloss of the Hegelian terms: first it begins with the merely vicarious apprehension of *another* ('for it finds itself as another being' (*PbG*: ¶179)); it continues with the apprehension of *another autonomous agent like me* ('the other independent being'); which finally leads to the full-blooded reciprocal apprehension of *both of us as autonomous agents* ('it receives back its own self' and 'lets the other again go free' (*PbG*: ¶181)).

The reflexive distance of the original loss structures the movement described above, and will afford the constitution of Spirit the proper notion of *opposition*. This is part of the overall argument of the *Phenomenology*—namely, the tendency towards actuality—and hence the constitution of Spirit cannot prescind from those individuals who apprehend it.

Nevertheless, the culmination of the argument in the acknowledgment of the freedom of another lacks the proper *self-recognition*—brought about by the role of action in the movement of self-constitution. In other words, this is Hegel's presentation of the difficulty for which the Lord-Bondsman relationship is the solution. This receiving back of *its own self* is the distinctively first-personal gain that will limit the conception of another self-conscious individual as mere projection. The act of a principled self-constitution will thus afford an individual self-conscious person an internal perspective of another self-conscious individual. This is something that can be tentatively described as follows: *he has constituted himself through his own action in the same form I have through mine*.¹⁶

Before this stage, however, Hegel describes a second moment that makes evident to the reader the cognitive lack felt by a potential self-conscious individual in

having any substantive conception of another that is not merely a kind of reductive projection. The loss of uniqueness is the necessary first step that leads Self-Consciousness to a bare projective conception of the other. As such, Self-Consciousness does not ‘see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self’ (*PbG*: ¶179). This lack of essentiality is the obvious impediment to a genuine reciprocal recognition. Nevertheless, to overcome this mere projective vicariousness, Self-Consciousness will have to undergo the *intrasubjective* process that will make it possible to achieve genuine identity, allowing it to understand the genuine identity of another self-conscious individual (as in Hegel’s phrase ‘individuality that takes itself to be real in and for itself’).

In what follows, Hegel properly develops this idea by giving it its proper practical content. The philosophical explanation of the notion of practical reality will show the mode by which a determinate agent can retain genuine, contentful *reflexive distance* from another. This will impinge, however, on Hegel’s next step—namely, the qualification of a *contract* as inessential, which in his argument amounts simply to the formal possibility of individuality and a *non-philosophical* conception of cooperation.

This has the following consequence: Hegel’s argument establishes recognition as structured by the essential character of a reflexive distance the individual members have to keep towards each other, and this distance can, essentially, only be obtained by Self-Consciousness deriving the concept of personal identity from *its own action*. We may also put this course of argument under the guise of its intended result: the *reflexive distance* Hegel is working out is the *possibility condition* of the ‘I, that is *We* and *We*, that is *P*’ (*PbG*: ¶177). Accordingly, the *reflexive distance* at work will issue in the constitution of Spirit, provided that several persons are capable of understanding the compatibility between their autonomy and their dependence as members of a species (provided they are able to perform ‘universal work produced by the action of all and each’ (*PbG*: ¶439)). Hegel then avoids the idea of conflation between the *I* and *another* (as in another person) to retain a *modicum* of an individual practical deliberative capacity (*PbG*: ¶186). Doing so thereby affords Hegel the possibility of further conceptualizing the moral idea of freedom in the second part of Chapter IV.

All of this has set the reader on the path for the life-and-death struggle since the reflexive distance worked out so far is still a matter of immediacy. Further, in an immediate stage, and before undergoing the *intrasubjective* requirement of the Lord-Bondsman relationship, Self-Consciousness has only one way to resolve the desire that points beyond immediate life and to another person: the violent collision with this other self-conscious individual. The proof of freedom can only be won by this initial violent collision (*PbG*: ¶187).

Eventually, the suppression of this form of immediacy relies on the cognitive gain effected in the Lord-Bondsman section. The Lord and Bondsman

relationship is the allegorical representation (the attainment of the *for itself*) of the inevitability for any given actual person, while moving in accordance with its nature (the *in itself*), to give herself identity *as an agent*—what shall be conceptualized under the rubric of *Bildung*—according to ends autonomously given—that shall in turn be conceptualized under the rubric of ‘fear of the Lord’. Before embarking on an interpretation of the life-and-death struggle, it is helpful to consider a few other passages that constitute a critique of a merely formal or contractual solution to the problem of Spirit.

Hegel attempts to clearly render that this contractual solution represents a false start¹⁷ for the attainment of Spirit. And his aim is to maintain the attainment of such a problematic throughout the *Phenomenology*. The form of this argument runs as follows: the contractual solution overrides the specific and personal differences between agents. It overrides the actual content, which the reflexive distance made tangible. This is a fundamental step in the apprehension of the concept of recognition since recognizing *another* person as such will imply that this other person has given herself, through her own action, an identity *to be recognized*.

This form of compatibilism between becoming an autonomous person, and the unavoidable character of dependence *as Spirit*, is the basis of Hegel’s notion of recognition. Therefore, his notion of recognition cannot, in the argument of the *Phenomenology*, remain merely at a formal stage. Unlike the notion of a person, the notion of an *independent Self-Consciousness* (*PbG*: ¶187), as Hegel maintains, is indeed obtained *only by risking one’s life*. This qualification matters greatly, and it is no small task to understand the contrastive forces at work at this moment in Hegel’s argument.

V. Contract as a first non-philosophical intuition

This description of a contract accommodates the reflexive distance, which has already been worked out. Hegel’s presentation of this contractual theme is, to say the least, gnomic. There are, however, a few crucial elements that should be described here: firstly, (a) the externally mediated subjectivity. Secondly, (b) the explicit comparison to the *play of forces*.

It is relevant that the formal solution Hegel criticizes represents a wider movement in his thought. The most obvious description of this progression—from a merely reified formal conception of collective action, toward an explicit philosophical conception—appears in the argument of the *Philosophy of Right*. As will be outlined here, this moment of the argument in the *Phenomenology* is exceptionally compressed. It is necessary to unpack it, however, since otherwise it would be difficult to interpret the explicit contrastive character in the passage: ‘the individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a *person*, but he has

not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness' (*PbG*: ¶187). Furthermore, the contrastive character of the statement can only be comprehended as a hierarchical progression toward a proper philosophical apprehension. In turn it will reveal the real source of normativity, the independent self-conscious individuals, constituting Spirit.

This represents the motivation behind Hegel's project and the very reason for the *intrasubjective* argument. The *source of a normative form of life* has to be described *phenomenologically* as a primitive and constitutive element of all *self-conscious individuals*. Hegel represents this problem of identification and repositioning of normativity using the comparison to the previously introduced notion: the *play of forces*, in itself a reified form of explanation. Furthermore, the first description of a contractual *modus vivendi* is characterized as merely formal and devoid of any actual content (in the sense of *Wirklichkeit*).

V.i. The externally mediated intersubjectivity

The contrastive force in the statement concerning the individual-who-has-not-risked-his-life must be carefully considered. To anticipate the argument briefly: Hegel's concern, and the *rationale* behind the contrastive statement, is that a contractual notion of recognition will lead to nothing more than a dislocation of the source of normativity that structures human life to an external reified form. As a matter of fact, in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel considers this form of hypostatizing to be a bad trait of character:

Since, in personality, particularity is not present as freedom, everything which depends on particularity is here a matter of indifference. To have no interest except in one's formal right may be pure obstinacy, often a fitting accompaniment of a cold heart and restricted sympathies.¹⁸

However, this formulation from the *Philosophy of Right* depends on the cognitive gain effected in the *Phenomenology* (and actually refers to it in the argument¹⁹). In order to reach the point concerning the dislocation of the source of normativity from the self-conscious individual to the notion of reified formality, Hegel's presentation of the problem will be discussed in detail.

Hegel's formulation of a contractual outlook reads as follows:

Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both. (*PbG*: ¶182)

This statement is then followed by a comparison: ‘In this movement we see repeated the process which presented itself as the play of Forces, but repeated now in consciousness’ (*PbG*: ¶184).

At this point, the argument positions this reflexive distance as a condition for the possibility of entertaining collective ends. The conditional character of Hegel’s statement—that what *is to happen can only be brought about by both*—is one more anticipation of Spirit. Nevertheless, Hegel does not recognize an arbitrary and schematic possibility of deliberation on collective ends to be the solution for the peculiar orotic problem—that is, the formal solution does not bring about *the satisfaction of Self-Consciousness in another*.

Hegel rehearses a similar argument in the *Philosophy of Right* concerning the formation of the state.²⁰ In that text, his point concerns the reification of the rational end of human life into what *seems like* an arbitrary contractual act of the will. As in the passage quoted above, the problem of normative dislocation assumes a pathological aspect that can only be cognitively rectified by a proper philosophical apprehension (namely, the rationality of belonging to a state is contained in the normative nature of every person).

Hegel’s vocabulary accounts for the necessity of establishing, in the first person, a correct outlook on what a *person is*—i.e. agents, acting according to their own ends in *the world*, alongside others like them with whom they share some ends—is the *reflection into a unity* (*PbG*: ¶189). The significance of this reflection, which Hegel describes as an achievement, will facilitate understanding the next step in the concept of *Spirit*, which implies a genuine reciprocal apprehension. Nonetheless, in order to achieve full-blooded reciprocity, Self-Consciousness cannot *merely recognize and be recognized*, or recognize each other mutually as recognizing (*PbG*: ¶184). This is to say that schematic identical acts of the will will not suffice: Spirit demands a robust conception of recognition, i.e. recognizing someone, say, as good, or bad.

Hegel is careful to qualify his initial presentation of the problem as being analogous to *the play of forces*. In this way, the argument stays on track to re-establish concrete agency as the source of normativity. The scope of this problem is certainly very wide. Despite the difficulty, Hegel advances this form of critical reflection on the anteriority of a reified notion, not only to re-establish the source of normativity as issuing from Self-Consciousness, but also to put forward an admittedly non-Hobbesian conception of social life.²¹ It is at this moment in the argument of the *Phenomenology* that there is a firm rejection of fear as constituting an external source of authority in the *person* of a *Leviathan*. There is, at this stage of the argument, an explicit *first-philosophy* at work: the *life-and-death struggle* is a concrete expression not only of a desire of one self-conscious individual for another self-conscious individual; indeed it is the *absence of fear* of one self-conscious individual before another.

In the argument Hegel will soon present, fear will emerge within Self-Consciousness as rational and as capable of being the source of normative

authority or, as Hegel maintains, the beginning of wisdom. This will be the conclusion of the ‘dislocation’ argument advanced earlier: the dislocation of the source of normativity from the external reified notion back into the self-conscious individual person. Nonetheless, and before addressing this particular notion of fear, which contains Hegel’s *first philosophy*, it is relevant to consider the comparison to the *play of forces*.

V.ii. *The comparison to the play of forces made explicit*

Hegel establishes a direct comparison: ‘in this movement we see repeated the process which presented itself as the play of forces, but repeated now in consciousness’ (*PbG*: ¶184). He points out the need to resolve the reified character of the *play of forces*—or, even better, its character as a *permanent beyond* (*PbG*: ¶144). Nevertheless, the repetition is qualified: it is now *in consciousness*. And this qualification represents the need for consciousness to apprehend itself as the source of normativity. It is important, at this point of the argument, to remember the particular transition effected in ‘Force and Understanding’, since Hegel presents this argument as an extension of that transition—that is, the transition from the *play of forces* to the realm of laws (*PbG*: ¶149). This transition is only effective after *the understanding* has apprehended itself as the real object of the investigation (*PbG*: ¶148), after the dissolution of the syllogism (*PbG*: ¶145). The introduction of a manifestly normative notion—the notion of law—is strictly concomitant with the characterization of the active aspect of *the understanding* as something that explains the super-sensible world in the form of laws. The inhospitable character of the *absolute flux*, Hegel’s image for utter contingency, is converted by *the understanding* into the *tranquil image* of laws (*PbG*: ¶149). This image is yet to be disrupted, once again, by the introduction of the *inverted world*.²²

Hegel refines this notion of *the understanding* as the source of normativity over the course of his argument. He does this firstly through the notion of indifference, that force *as such* is indifferent to its law (*PbG*: ¶152) (the sort of indifference Self-Consciousness cannot have), and secondly, in the peculiar extension of the notion of law to cover the moral case of crime and punishment (*PbG*: ¶159).

The notion of indifference plays a crucial role in the refinement of the normative. Hegel, after characterizing electricity as indifferent to its *being*—or, as indifferent *qua* force to its law—goes on to say that a further expression of this indifference is the normative force of a definition. The term ‘normative’ appears here because Hegel’s argument concerns the attempt, by means of preparing a definition, not to regress back to the pure unrest of the play of forces (*PbG*: ¶152). Of course, the argument—and this will be the very point of the extension of the notion of law to morals—concerns the topic of thinking the nexus between meaning and the perceived world; in other words how the normative notion of law affords a *description* of the world.

Hegel will describe crime and punishment as a form of reconciliation. He explicitly considers punishment *qua nomos* as present in the actual crime *qua physis*, much like the play of forces *qua physis* is present in the law *qua nomos*. But the theme of reconciliation is not merely the final resolution for the understanding's apprehension of its being the normative source of a coherent explanation of the world (although it is also that). Moreover, it is the introduction of an active stance towards the world that will characterize Self-Consciousness—that is, the need to abandon a contemplative stance which leads to the final realization that dependence on a world is necessary to a peculiar kind of action.

The terms at this stage of the argument are unequivocally action-related and are arguably an anticipation of the central problem of the 'Lordship and Bondage' section. Hegel clearly states, while still discussing reconciliation, that 'the truth of intention is only the act itself' (*PbG*: ¶159). Once again, Hegel resolves the issue at hand on the side of *actuality*. The explicit practical aspect of the example is important, because Hegel maintains that the reconciliation between the law and the crime is in the *actual punishment*, the action of punishing. It is in this example that the retributive nature of Hegel's thought is truly exemplified. The law does not rest *qua nomos* in its tranquil expression, but has to be, for its validity as such, reconciled in the punishing *qua physis*. This conception of law is, for this very reason, not merely *formal*. It is the expression of actual life, or of the actual presence of evil in persons. Hegel calls it an *immanent necessity* (*PbG*: ¶161), because the stability of the law is more than the diremption of the world of appearance (or the world of punishing) and the *inner world* (the world of law). The diremption is superseded by a punishment that is not defined by vengeance (as this would merely destroy the criminal); it is superseded by a punishment that is actually a pardon (with the end to restore the criminal's own humanity (*PbG*: ¶158)). Hegel then adduces this example to extensively qualify the normative notion, from the previous chapter, as being on the side of actuality.

VI. The absence of fear in risking one's life and the fear of the lord as the beginning of wisdom: locating Hegel's first philosophy

The previous two sections are meant to interpret the contrastive force in the statement: 'the individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a *person*, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness' (*PbG*: ¶187).

The association of *risking one's life* with freedom can only be understood after the consideration that the Hegelian notion of freedom implies a concrete form of life—this is, of course, the main reason why the Lord-Bondsman relationship will resolve on the side of *service*—even if the relation between those who belong to this

form of life is characteristically problematic. The argument, so far, has also adduced the fact that the external mediation of the contractual solution represents a false start since it does not entail the cognitive gain the *Phenomenology* is meant to show.

It is relevant to note that this argument turns on the initial notion of *desire*. As already mentioned, as the argument advances, the notion of desire being developed begins to necessitate a kind of practical rationality that properly apprehends the complex *desideratum*. However, at this point, the proper manner of apprehension is still *in absentia*.

The way the argument illustrates this necessitation is through Hegel's description of the outcome of this *struggle* as a peculiar kind of failure. (It is a kind of failure that would be entirely impossible for a Hobbesian mind,²³ because the operative concept in Hobbes is a specific fear of one another, which is the source of external power that will subdue the harmful tendencies of all against all.) However, Hegel's problem is quite the opposite: the reasoning constantly runs up against a particular *deficiency* that impedes the *desire* one self-conscious individual has for another self-conscious individual to be satisfied.²⁴

There is, in fact, textual evidence for this Hobbesian kind of reversal. Later, in the argument concerning the *frenzy of self-conceit*, there is a description of a *struggle of all against one another* (PbG: ¶379), but not as occurring naturally in a state of nature, as it were before rationality, but rather as a consequence of a perfectionist apprehension of the source of the law as being constitutive of an individual's heart. Further, Hegel says that the resistance each offers against the other is the path to the apprehension of the *reality of power and public* (PbG: ¶378) order. This resistance will issue in the new shapes of *virtue and the way of the world* that are as such negotiated, concrete and normatively structured forms of life. Nevertheless, the reversal of the Hobbesian *first philosophy* is clear: the *state of war* is endemic to the *public order* (PbG: ¶379); it is a normatively structured problem, deriving from self-conscious individuality, to be solved by a rational process in the constitution of Spirit.

To return to the contrastive force in the phrase under consideration, and keeping this Hobbesian reversal in mind, it becomes clear that the recognition of different independent persons as the constitution of Spirit will only be properly effected, if these have come to understand their natures—*intrasubjectively*—as the source of the normativity that structures their forms of life. Therefore, that argument must run as follows: my *intrasubjective* apprehension of my independence is my act of self-constitution; or rather, it is my principled, deliberative, act of self-constitution. Hegel is certain that once this argument is put into effect over the several stages of the Lord-Bondsman relationship—i.e. *service, work, formative activity*—this *intrasubjective* cognitive gain will allow a person to understand other self-constituting agents without mere projection. This cognitive gain in turn, will

largely qualify a person's constitutive dependence on other persons in the constitution of Spirit. Spirit will imply a continual process of keeping the full-blooded reciprocity intact, which Hegel describes as a first-personal attitude. This is inherently an element of a moral psychology directed towards collective *spiritual* life, a form of life maintained by the humble posture of always 'self-sacrificing and benevolent, in which each accomplishes his own work' (*PbG*: ¶439).

The individuals under *phenomenological* scrutiny in the argument thus know that *life is not merely the motion of limbs* (Hobbes 2017: 81), but points to something prospective and constitutive that they have to actualize alongside each other. They do not fear each other, but they all *fear the non-arbitrary Lord within them* (*PbG*: ¶436); they *fear in general*, or *respect* that which informs life—that is, the *end* life points to and for which life is meant. From this position, it is relevant to further explore what has been termed here Hegel's 'Hobbesian reversal', which is the orotic push of a self-conscious individual to another *like* him, even though Self-Consciousness does not yet have the proper form of grasping this. Notice, however, that this argument implies a requalification of the concept of self-preservation. This is exactly what Hegel denotes with the contrastive statement concerning the inessentiality of recognition *as a person* in a merely formal way: the notion of *self-preservation* found in a Hobbesian person issues from the *concrete* fear of violent death, which in turn is constitutive of a reified notion, i.e. an external notion of control: the political or the theological.²⁵ Hegel's *first philosophy* implies a reversal of this assessment of natural consciousness. Again, the Hegelian individuals do not fear each other; they kill each other because they *desire* each other. Consequently, they will recognize that killing the other is a form of self-destruction since satisfaction is to be found in others and in Spirit.

At this intersection between natural existence and a deliberative *beyond*, both the dislocation and the qualification of *fear* as internal to Self-Consciousness should be addressed. A form of compatibilism between a deliberative capacity and natural existence is at play in this context; this is the meaning of the introduction of the relationship of the Lord to the Bondsman: 'in this experience, self-consciousness learns that life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness' (*PbG*: ¶189).

Notice that Hegel does qualify *fear*—now, *within one self-consciousness*—as general: 'for this consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments' (*PbG*: ¶194). The fear under consideration is not circumstantial; it is distinctively ethical. This fear is the fear of the absolute disappearance of the conditions that make the actualization of Spirit possible. This becomes clear not only to the one who dies in the struggle, but also to the one who survives

death certainly shows that each staked his life and held it of no account, both in himself and in the other; but that is not for

those who survived this struggle. They put an end to their consciousness in its alien setting of natural existence, that is to say they put an end to themselves. (*PbG*: ¶188)

Therefore the death of the other is not a victory, but self-annihilation. In this context, fear of death as *the absolute Lord* should be interpreted in the strict prudential sense; that is, as meaning that the seat of practical deliberation is life (not merely staying alive within solitude, but staying alive *in order to* achieve Spirit). This is the rationale that interprets the dependence of the Lord upon the Bondsman, and vice versa, and concomitantly interprets any person's dependence on both their deliberation and their ability to act. Further, as Hegel maintains, without *service* 'fear remains at the formal stage, and does not extend to the known real world of existence' (*PbG*: ¶196).

This statement illustrates the importance of the dislocation of *fear* to the inner of Self-Consciousness as the genuine source of normativity. The self-constitutive act represented by the *formative activity* brings about the revelation of *Self-Consciousness for itself* as a proper philosophical apprehension. Only through a self-constitutive act, through *fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom*, will *fear* (as respect for authority) *ceases to be inward and mute* (*PbG*: ¶196).

Spirit is the concrete existence of the fear that Self-Consciousness will (in the next part of the argument) come to know as the possibility condition for the achievement of integrity. As outlined previously, this *fear* is not particular, but general; it is contained within every self-conscious individual. And it is this *fear*, as wisdom, that will bring about the satisfaction of the complex desire for another self-conscious individual as a form of reciprocity.

This last idea interprets the meaning of Hegel's reversal of the Hobbesian first philosophy. Contrary to Hobbes, who maintains that neither justice, nor injustice, are faculties of either body or mind,²⁶ Hegel's first philosophy purports to show that these are internal to the nature of Self-Consciousness as body (desire) and mind (fear). Now Self-Consciousness needs to apprehend the proper way to encounter satisfaction in others such as himself—namely because the desire to preserve *life* is the desire to preserve a certain kind of life, the life that befits a person amongst other persons and is beyond the merely immediate. Hegel's way of showing this is with the Lord-Bondsman relationship. The conclusion drawn here thus leads to the narrower circle of the concentric structure of the argument, the *intra-subjective* domain of the human mind.

VII. The main trope interpreted

VII.i. *Lord and Bondsman: deliberation and instrumental reasoning*

The struggle described above has pushed Hegel's argument fully into its *intrasubjective* phase, the *reflection of self-consciousness into itself* (*PbG*: ¶176). After understanding

that life is *as* important *as* pure self-consciousness (*PbG*: ¶189)—that is, life *is for* the constitution of Spirit—Hegel will use the allegory of Lord and Bondsman to find the proper adequacy between the self-constitution of integrity and the constitution of Spirit. This can be paraphrased as follows: Self-Consciousness will apprehend its deliberative capacity (so far it is only intimated rudimentarily in the *submission model*) as situated, and eventually as conforming to the existence of *other* self-conscious individuals, that unlike the bits and pieces of matter, as well as other animals, cannot merely be submitted to any other form.

Hegel then describes the result of the *struggle* as a sort of diremption: the Lord and the Bondsman are two opposed shapes of consciousness, *before reflection into a unity has been achieved* (*PbG*: ¶189).²⁷ This passage is especially relevant, not only as an indication of the concentric structure of the argument (alluded to throughout this article) but also to explain what Hegel will present as a solution to the peculiar *failure of desire* (in its previous *submission model*).

To pause for a moment, the *reflection into a unity* will be a distinct kind of cognitive gain for Hegel's argument. Specifically, the unity under discussion here is equivalent to the achievement of *personal integrity*. In turn, this integrity will function within the argument as the possibility condition of understanding other *self-constituting* integral persons (the corrective to the peculiar failure of desire). To explore this further: the double aspect of the relation of the Lord to the Bondsman condenses a complex process by which Self-Consciousness understands itself first as *becoming* the kind of *subject* it will then, in turn, recognize in others as the complex *desideratum*—that is, another self-conscious person, not a mere *object*. The implication at this moment of the argument is that Self-Consciousness does not understand *yet* this *other like himself* whom he desires, because he has not *yet self-constituted* himself as an integral person.²⁸

The peculiarity of the failure of desire within Hegel's argument consists precisely in its precipitating *Self-Consciousness* to the apprehension of the Lord. The Lord is a deliberative capacity, which endemically possesses a certain *distance* with respect to the world. The lord is the beginning of a teleological reflection upon desires, needs and prospection in general; it is the correction of the immediacy of the *autotelic* conception determined earlier in the chapter.

The roles of the Lord and Bondsman can be understood more perspicuously through a comparison: Christine Korsgaard, in the conclusion to her *Sources of Normativity* (1996), tries to define the necessity of a reflective structure that backs up moral action. She describes this structure as a sort of *double nature*, or I am arguing, as a *Hegelian nature*.

The fact that we must in the light of reflection gives us a double nature. The thinking self has the power to command the acting self, and it is only its command that can make action obligatory.

A good thinking self commands the acting self only to do what is good, but the acting self must in any case do what it says. (1996: 165).

The similarity in this presentation to Hegel is striking. This is so because, like Hegel, Korsgaard is trying to make explicit the necessary connection between action and normativity. This demonstration, if it is to avoid the Hobbesian type of reification discussed above, will tend toward a problematic duplication within one *self-conscious* person. In what follows, Hegel will offer the anatomy of this diremption between the Lord and Bondsman to show that it has no stability as such and will conflate into one *integral person*. The suppression of this diremption (that when kept open will issue in the *Unhappy Consciousness*) demands that action ought to be principled (as Hegel says, any action *serves* a principle). So Hegel will develop this thought through the concept of *servitude*. To this extent, he will present the action of the Bondsman as ‘really the action of the Lord’ (*PbG*: ¶191). And this *servitude* will exhibit the importance of self-constitution to Self-Consciousness.

Regarding Korsgaard’s thought that the thinking self only commands what is good, Hegel will argue for such a necessity in the figure of the *sceptic* (an argument that culminates in the notion of a *non-arbitrary Lord* (*PbG*: ¶436)). Like Korsgaard, Hegel intends to show the place of a moral psychology in the context of individual human life, and further qualify this moral psychology as strictly constitutive of *Spiritual life*.

This last point is indispensable for the understanding of the economy of Hegel’s argument and therefore should be described further. It is true that the entire ‘Self-Consciousness’ chapter anticipates the argument concerning Spirit. Nonetheless—and this is the *animus* behind the present argument for the concentric structure of Hegel’s argument—it is crucial that the constitution of Spirit will depend on the proper *intrasubjective* conception being put forward because the acts of *recognition* of other integral persons depend firstly on the proper apprehension of oneself as capable of *becoming* an integral person. This is precisely the reason behind the *Hobbesian reversal*: it is a false start, a false conception of human nature. The apprehension of what Self-Consciousness is *in-and-for-itself* will lead to what *Spirit* is *in-and-for-itself*. This is the formula for Hegel’s *first philosophy*, a form of compatibilism, which is expressed as the maintenance of a *life for a purpose*, as *Spirit* or in the formula of *desire for another Self-Consciousness*. Hyppolite describes this form of compatibilism as the *double task* of the *Phenomenology* ‘to lead naïve consciousness to philosophical knowledge and to lead individual consciousness to emerge from his would-be isolation [...] so as to raise it to Spirit’ (1979: 322).

Given that this elucidation of the Lord-Bondsman trope evinces the structure of practical rationality, it is now necessary to understand Hegel’s detailed argument for the proper articulation between deliberative and instrumental reasoning as

issuing in the self-constitution of integrity. This, in turn, constitutes the reciprocal recognition amongst persons that will lead to the constitution of Spirit.²⁹

VII.ii. *The tripartite structure of the self-constitution of integrity: servitude, work and formative activity*

The tripartite structure Hegel presents in the last paragraph of the section under consideration shows the culmination of the argument concerning both the source of normativity as located *inside Self-Consciousness* (where *fear of the Lord as the beginning of Wisdom* (PbG: ¶195)) and the achievement of an integral identity (i.e. ‘becomes for himself, someone existing on his own account’ (PbG: ¶196)).

As mentioned previously, the presentation of servitude establishes a necessary connection between the action of the Lord and the action of the Bondsman. Nevertheless, this connection is problematic at first; Hegel calls this an unequal form of recognition. This inequality is the result of the Lord, the deliberative element of *Self-Consciousness*, trying to preserve the *purity of its action*, given the *failure of desire*. As such, Self-Consciousness tries to preserve a pure deliberative mode of action that remains pure at the expense of being ineffective.

Nonetheless, this purity necessarily collapses. The Lord is confronted by its *dependence* on the servile consciousness (PbG: ¶192). Once again, the *Lord-Bondsman relationship* shows the absolute necessity of servitude as constitutive of practical rationality (that is, actions according to ends, and in turn, practical rationality as constitutive of human nature). Recognition of the impossible severance between Lord and Bondsman amounts to the proper recognition of one’s nature.³⁰

Thus it is not surprising that Hegel first addresses the issue of *recognition* in this *intrasubjective* context, especially considering he has previously addressed this topic of recognition *intersubjectively* as the pre-philosophic notion of a contract. Now Hegel begins to present his solution. At this stage, past the point of risking one’s life, the argument is now within the duplication of Self-Consciousness. It is here, in the recognition of the nature of Self-Consciousness as demanding integrity, that the normative force of any *self-constitution* (or better, the necessity of the *constitution of Spirit*) is to be found.

Servitude shows that life, or attachment to life, and the desire for the complex *desideratum* is a principled *self-constituting* act. Therefore, it is in this first-personal venue that full-blooded reciprocity is to be found. Since all persons are a combination of self-legislating Lords and toiling Bondsmen, Hegel is simultaneously showing that the *recognition* of the source of normative force in self-constituting integrity is the same source of reciprocal recognition *and* the same source imposing limits on cooperation. Notice that persons can indeed execute each other’s ends, they can give permanence to each other’s ends and cooperate. But it does not follow that they can be mere Bondsmen, or be treated as mere *means*; in accordance

with the nature of Self-Consciousness, they contain the Lord within themselves and their nature is equally the source of normativity.

The Lord discovers its essence in service, and the Bondsman in the consummation of its service will turn into an independent consciousness (namely, an integral person). The *nature* of *Self-Consciousness* will appear both as necessitating a *principle*, being not merely the automatic emergence of desires, and an effective action that constitutes the reality of all ends. At this stage, Hegel glosses, once again, a thought that has been running through the entire argument: the *truth* that Lord and Bondsman are *one* and the same action appears first *outside of Self-Consciousness* (PbG: ¶193). The reversal of this apprehension—from *outside to inside Self-Consciousness*—is effected by the apprehension of *general fear* as it has been described before. Servitude shows, in effect, that normativity is obedience—that is, normativity *is for the self-constitution of a life* and *life is for the constitution of Spirit*.

This then leads to the notion of *work* via the success of servitude. Servitude is the way Self-Consciousness rids itself of mere immediate natural attachment by giving effectual existence to principled action. Hegel addresses this effectual existence under the rubric of work. It is important to notice that Hegel will address work in a nexus with the concept of desire. Work will make desire operative, it will give it permanence, it will rescue it from the brutish submission-repression nexus.

In *work*, Hegel establishes the proper nexus between principled action and an actual world. The connection with the notion of permanence-of-an-actual-world is a crucial qualification for the complex notion of desire, which is qualified throughout the entire B section of the *Phenomenology*. The notion of *desire-held-in-check* or *fleetingness-staved-off* (PbG: ¶195) condenses the possibility of a *sharable* system of desires; essentially, it condenses the *value* of a permanent order of goods, needs and practices (food, houses and schooling). Hence, the notion of work makes a necessary contribution to the constitution of Spirit. Hegel establishes this connection by qualifying the notion of work as giving identity to the Bondsman: he who works according to a deliberative principle ‘becomes conscious of what he truly is’ (PbG: ¶195).

Initially the emergence of a desire in the Lord *seemed* unessential; it *seemed* a mere matter for the Bondsman to resolve. In work, nonetheless, Lord and Bondsman discover the possibility of permanence; they discover that desire is essential to the nature of Self-Consciousness and therefore not incompatible with the independence of Self-Consciousness (which was initially thematized in the independence of the Lord). This is the conclusion to the anticipated experience that both *life* and *pure Self-Consciousness* were equally essential to it, glossed here under the dictum ‘life is for living in accordance to principle’.

This leads to the final notion introduced by Hegel: *formative activity*. It is concomitant with the notion of work, but there is a change in *direction*. The

permanence achieved by work is a permanence in the world, in the initial *otherness*, while *formative activity* is a *permanence* achieved in the person through the work done (*PbG*: ¶196). Therefore, work and formative activity are two sides of the same coin.

Hegel makes an important connection here between this inherent practical notion of work, formative activity, fear and, finally, power. He describes the conclusion of the Lord-Bondsman argument as the Bondsman's *rediscovery of himself by himself* (*PbG*: ¶196). This is the concrete image of *integrity*; it is, as are all-important notions argued for in the argument of the *Phenomenology*, presented as a cognitive gain with a distinctive self-reflective character. The Bondsman's rediscovery represents yet another important feature: as with the argument presented at the end of 'Force and Understanding' concerning the concept of *law*; the final argument of 'Lordship and Bondage' resolves on the side of actuality —namely, it resolves on the side of an activity that is effective in the world, that makes it possible for someone to acquire personal identity. As such, Hegel forms an argument that concerns the normative nature of Self-Consciousness, couching it in the significance of the cognitive content of the actions performed by any person: this is the nature of Self-Consciousness, to *become* an integral person, that will constitute Spirit.³¹

Hegel refers to this *self-constituting* action, which is necessary for what he calls the apprehension of the *universal mode* (*PbG*: ¶196). This is the result of *fear and service* (referred to as a nexus) and *formative activity* as contributing to the acquisition by the Bondsman of a *mind of its own* (*PbG*: ¶196). It is the cognitive significance of this *self-constituting* action that makes obedience to principle effectual on the side of actuality; it makes the recognition of *normativity* necessary by recognizing its cognitive import in the *permanent shaping of the nature of Self-Consciousness*. Hegel refers to this necessity in the following way: 'without the discipline of service and obedience, fear remains at the formal stage, and does not extend to the known real world of existence' (*PbG*: ¶196).

It is important to notice that *fear* is referred to here as *formal* and as necessitating action *in order* to cease to be merely formal. After this scrutiny of the tripartite structure of the *intrasubjective* activity of Self-Consciousness, fear can be understood *as* the universal mode of the attainment by all individuals of their Self-Consciousness. Now they are in a position to understand obedience to deliberation as their nature and their nature as the source of normativity.

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Notes

¹ The two main members of this family are Jean Hyppolite (1979) and John McDowell (2013). However, my reading differs from both.

² Frederick Neuhouser has described the relevance of the first-personal character of Hegel's argument as relevant to the understanding of Hegel's dialectical method within the *Phenomenology*. His observation concerns the material contained in Lordship and Bondage: "“Self-consciousness,” then, aims to narrate the “experience” of a subject as it progressively uncovers the conditions under which it is possible for it to realize its conception of itself as free (or self-sufficient) and thereby find itself as such in the world’ (2009: 39).

³ McDowell maintains, as a conclusion to his argument (2003: 165), that the material presented in ‘Lordship and Bondage’ is initially theoretical and only later practical. I believe the issue in ‘Lordship and Bondage’ is inherently practical.

⁴ The correct appreciation of the *intrasubjective* character of ‘Lordship and Bondage’ may contribute to Pippin's notion that Spirit is ‘a product of itself’ (2008: 34)—that is, it contributes to an interpretation of the correct ontological status of Spirit as a product of practical reasoning as it is detailed in ‘Lordship and Bondage’.

⁵ This reflection is implied by the *double task* of the *Phenomenology*. Deleuze highlights that the apprehension of the nature of Self-Consciousness as *Desire (überhaupt)* in his review of Hyppolite's *Logic and Existence*: ‘That philosophy must be ontology means first of all that it is not anthropology. Anthropology wants to be a discourse *on* man. It assumes, as such, the empirical discourse *of* man, in which the one who speaks and that of which one speaks are separated. Reflection is on one side and being on the other’ (Deleuze 1997:191–92). In this sense, a Hegelian first philosophy amounts to an account of the coincidence of *being* and *reflection*.

⁶ Charles Taylor describes the importance of Hegel's non-dualism as the proper comprehension of Hegel's project: ‘so this theory of expression gives us a view of thinking beings in which thought is inseparable from its medium. And hence it takes just these functions, of pure thought, reflection, deliberation, which one would be most tempted to attribute to disembodied mind, and reclaims them for embodied existence’ (Taylor 1975: 82).

⁷ Leo Strauss recognized the implications of a first philosophy—in the qualified sense of a redefinition of human nature through philosophy—by recognizing the influence of Descartes upon Hobbes: ‘Descartes begins the groundwork of philosophy with distrust of his own prejudices, with distrust above all of the potential *deus deceptor*, just as Hobbes begins interpreting the State and therewith all morality by starting from men's natural distrust’ (1952: 56–57). He then goes on to read Hegel's project in ‘Lordship and Bondage’ as Hegel's recognition of the Hobbesian reinterpretation of human nature, which he describes as Hegel tacitly recognizing ‘the superiority of Hobbes's philosophic basis to that of Descartes’ (1952: 56–57). Similarly, Kojève reads the initial material contained in ‘Lordship and Bondage’, specifically the connection between *Begierde* and reflection, as a Hegelian answer to Descartes's *first philosophy* (Kojève 1969: 36–37).

⁸ Pippin, in his *Hegel's Idealism*, expresses doubt concerning the relationship between the willingness to die and freedom. I believe the account I provide may shed light on the position Hegel occupies in what Pippin calls ‘the old tradition’ that associates freedom to a willingness to die (Pippin 1989: 161).

⁹ Taylor makes reference to the Hobbesian background in the Hegelian project in the context of a practical presupposition to the realization of Spirit (Taylor 1975: 82). Pippin has similarly described this Hobbesian background as a relevant issue. However, he has some reservations concerning the social character of the topic at this stage of the *Phenomenology*, going as far as saying that it is unlikely that addressing this topic would be akin to ‘beginning the book again on a new topic’ (Pippin 2011: 64). I believe that appreciation of the scope of the philosophical issue regarding the source of normativity and the comparison to the *play of forces* resolves the continuity problem. This solution depends, nevertheless, on the correct appreciation of the *intrasubjective* and *practical* character of the argument.

¹⁰ My image of concentricity is meant to illustrate the difficulty of determining the ontological status of *Geist* in the *Phenomenology*. Although *Geist* will share the same centre as the individual Self-Consciousness, they are not the same. In this sense, a proper reading of ‘Lordship and Bondage’ has to evince that this concentric structure—namely, that the solution to the *intersubjective* problem of reciprocity lies in the *intrasubjective* apprehension of human nature—is isomorphic with the structure of the *Phenomenology*. Pippin spells out this ontological difficulty as the motivation for a rational construction of Hegel’s argument (Pippin 2008: 34–35). Paul Redding, building on Pippin, has also tried to delineate a strategy for what he calls the risk of committing Hegel to a bizarre ontology (Redding 2013: 1).

¹¹ Abbreviations used:

PbG = Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹² This notion of duplication within the *Phenomenology* has a particular history. In *PbG*: ¶206 the duplication *within itself* called Lord and Bondsman is referred to as being coextensive with *stoicism and scepticism*.

¹³ This concept of monotony is borrowed from Hyppolite (1979: 162).

¹⁴ This reference to a *feeling* is an anticipation of the expression: *the feeling of absolute power*.

¹⁵ Terry Pinkard paraphrases this important moment of the text as the agent not being ‘fully absorbed into his desires’ (Pinkard 2012: 59). The present argument tries to show that not being *fully absorbed* issues in a particular conception of oneself and others as objects of desire.

¹⁶ Redding has tried to read this reflexive capacity as issuing from Hegel’s commitment to distinctively Aristotelian *logical* categories. He describes that there is a certain *logic of agency* congenial to Aristotle and Hegel. The present argument tries to stress some of the aspects that are inherently practical in their relation to reflection (Redding 2013: 2–5, 15); the genesis of practical reason brings Hegel closer to Aristotle by positioning the argument of the *Phenomenology* within a tradition that envisages the comprehension of prudential limits to human reason. This is crucial

for understanding freedom within the project of the *Phenomenology*, which will problematize the notion of freedom in the section ‘Absolute Freedom and Terror’.

¹⁷ In *PbG*: ¶439, Hegel will consider Spirit the only ‘starting-point for the action of all, and [...] their purpose and goal’.

¹⁸ Axel Honneth describes this passage as a move to characterology intended to show the pathological nature of a fixation on formality that will function, in turn, as an obstruction to proper participation in social life (Honneth 2010: 35).

¹⁹ ‘Individuals and peoples have no personality until they have achieved this pure thought and knowledge of themselves’ (*PbG*: ¶35).

²⁰ ‘Everyone makes a contract with the monarch, so the argument runs, and he again with his subjects. This point arises from thinking superficially only of *one* unity of different wills. In contract, however there are two identical wills’ (*PbG*: ¶75).

²¹ This is suggested by Pippin (2011: 62).

²² It cannot be addressed here due to scope of the current article.

²³ A Hobbesian mind can be determined as follows: without aid of a common external power thrown into a ‘continuall feare, and danger of violent death’. Furthermore, Hobbes’s description of necessity of any normative structuring in human life is not based on a *desire-of-one-person-for-another*, but rather on the specific fear of death at the hands of another: ‘the passions that incline men to peace, are Fear of Death’, and as such does not resolve beyond a kind of *orectic solipsism* (Hobbes 2017:186–87).

²⁴ The first-personal apprehension of what I call the ‘deficiency’ endemic to human desire will become relevant in the proper interpretation of the concept of ‘sacrifice’. Bubbio persuasively shows the compatibility between sacrifice and what he calls deceptive illusion (2012: 807, 813). My suggestion is that the appreciation of what I call *absence of fear* may contribute to a reciprocal recognition of sacrifice—namely, sacrifice will include the first personal apprehension of the suspension of biological life for an end; it is a version of ‘life points to something other than itself’ (*PbG*: ¶172).

²⁵ When Hobbes wishes to clarify his definition of human nature for the reader, he tries to make his argument as concrete and specific as possible. For example, ‘it may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighted these things; that Nature should thus dissociate, and render men apt to invade and destroy one another [...] Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he armes himselfe, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors’ (Hobbes 2017: 186).

²⁶ ‘Justice, and Injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor Mind’ (Hobbes 2017: 188).

²⁷ John McDowell, in his heterodox reading, comments on the first-personal nature of this part of Hegel’s argument (2013:161–65). His intuition about the *intrasubjective* character of the argument resonates with the current reading of Hegel; however, in the present argument, this aspect is not read as a strict continuation of *Consciousness*, but rather as a full-blown *practical turn*.

²⁸ Hyppolite has best described this *intrasubjective* apprehension as a necessity internal to the argument: ‘individual consciousness must be shown its ontological relation to other beings-for-itself in the very heart of its being-for-itself’ (Hyppolite 1979: 321).

²⁹ It is important to notice that it is only at this stage of the argument that we can properly talk about a *practical turn*. Although it is true that this subject is anticipated earlier, the discussion regarding desire is not sufficient for the philosophical attainment of Self-Consciousness as inherently practical. The present argument intends to show that it is only with the introduction of the figures of the Lord and Bondsman that the practical turn is brought to its conclusion.

³⁰ Later, Hegel requalifies the Lord-Bondsman relationship as being in possession of ‘ethical laws, too, are present as sovereign commands’ (*PbG*: ¶203).

³¹ The apprehension of the source of normativity will be crucial to the understanding of what Pinkard terms the role played by reflective practices in our self-conception, and further ‘the reconciliation between *politics* and *reflection*’ (Pinkard 1994: 264). The *intrasubjective* apprehension of the tripartite structure reveals the critical apprehension of such practices that issue in the concept of individuality, as well as the critical position assumed by the noble and ignoble consciousness.

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