

CHAPTER EIGHT

Autonomy and Eigensinn Obstinate Bondsman Earns Honour¹

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Introduction

Kant's argument for the intertwinement of freedom with autonomy, as presented in *Critique of Practical Reason*² can be summed up rather concisely: the empirical world is a world where necessity reigns, and there is obviously no space for freedom within it. Insofar as an acting subject's will is determined by immediate affects towards the empirical world (e.g. desire), the agent is swallowed into this all-encompassing fabric of empirical necessity and is therefore not free. The only way for a subject to be free is if her will has another, non-empirical source of determination – namely reason. Reason deals with concepts, not empirical objects, and to formulate a motivation for action purely on the basis of concepts means precisely to formulate a law. And of course, these laws must also be derived purely from reason and not from any external authority, so that the actions are in fact the subject's *own* actions and not merely her following orders. This is why freedom is for Kant

1 Eigensinniger Knecht verdient Ehre.

2 In most concentrated form it is articulated in §6 (AA 5, 52).

possible only as autonomy: it needs laws that ensure the subject confronts the world literally *on her own terms*.

Can we somehow relate Kant's understanding of autonomy to *Eigensinn*? The idea behind making this connection will require some justification. After all, we are obviously not dealing with concepts of comparatively equal prominence in work of each author. *Eigensinn*, obstinacy,³ is a notion that Hegel uses in a few places in his work, and while its use is not quite focused and systematic enough that it would constitute a concept, I will show it is nonetheless – and perhaps exactly because of its relative flexibility – highly significant.

Hegel's uses of the term *Eigensinn* are scattered through his work predominantly with a negative connotation: it describes the rigid, stubborn, unmoving attitude of the individual who refuses to take upon herself the demands of the universal.⁴ This mostly means that we are talking about some point of failure (albeit a necessary one) for the development of spirit. He uses it to characterize, for example, the national character of pre-modern Germans, and attributes the failure of the Germans to constitute a state to this trait (GW 8, 238). In *Outlines of Philosophy of Right* he uses the term *Eigensinn* to describe one of the two extremes into which the free will can degenerate, extremes between which the actualization of free will must find a precarious balance (TWA 7, 57/Hegel 2008, 33). On one side we have the danger of freedom remaining too abstract, when a subject holds the openness of possibilities too dear, when she refuses to make the sacrifice of self-limitation, and thereby remains undetermined and unactualized. The opposing counterpart to this internal pathology of freedom is, however, the *eigensinniger* subject. This is a subject who has no qualms about determination, in fact she is prepared to take firm hold of arbitrary determination, as long as it is *her own*: the *eigensinnig* individual “supposes that he is not free unless he has

3 I find the most common English translation of *Eigensinn* – “obstinacy” – a bit lacklustre. Etymologically it relates to *standing* (in place) and hence indicates a purely passive, reactive attitude. It lacks the reflexive connotation of the German *eigen-*, which is something that matters a lot in Hegel's use of the term, as we will see. In fact, English translators recognized this, and hence *Eigensinn* is not translated consistently: Miller (Hegel 2003), for example, opts for “self-will”. In this text, I will use terms “obstinacy” and *Eigensinn* interchangeably, with a preference for the original where grammar allows it with sufficient elegance.

4 To my knowledge, there have been no focused and systematic treatments of Hegel's use of the notion of *Eigensinn*. The philosophical work that awards this term the most prominent position is probably Oskar Negt's and Alexander Kluge's *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (1993). While Hegel is a major reference, the work is ambitious in scope, syncretic and, for lack of a better term, curious. It is definitely something quite different to the relatively precise and contained analysis that I am attempting here.

this will" (ibid.). Or, as Hegel points out in *Encyclopedia* while describing the same duality: the refusal to determine oneself is the lack of character; *Eigensinn* is "the parody of character" (TWA 10, 73).

One circumstance that leads us to think that *Eigensinn* is an incredibly important sort of failure of freedom within the context of Hegel's philosophical system is the fact that the term also makes an appearance at the moment of Hegel's sharpest revision in the development of his thought. In the initial works of Hegel's Jena period, such as the essay *On the scientific treatment of natural law*, or *System der Sittlichkeit*, where Hegel started to assertively differentiate his position from the ethical and political philosophies of Kant and Fichte, he presented the strong conception of *Sittlichkeit*, to which the individual is strictly subordinated, conceptually and politically. However, just prior to writing *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in *Jenaersystementwürfe* from 1805/06, Hegel after all recognizes, against his earlier thoughts on this matter, that the modern individual can *not* after all be successfully subsumed under harmonious ideal of *Sittlichkeit*: the modern individual is too *eigensinnig*, she takes herself to be absolute against the existing universality (GW 8, 239).

There is, however, one exceptional appearance of the notion of *Eigensinn*. It stands out from the others insofar as this occurrence of *Eigensinn* is hardly critical. In fact, it is brought up in a rather approving tone in a place of outright programmatic importance – in the preface to *Philosophy of Right*. This is also the occurrence that is the main source of inspiration for establishing a specific connection to Kant, as it lends important credence to our claim that *Eigensinn* is significantly related to Kantian autonomy:

It is a great obstinacy (*Eigensinn*), the obstinacy which does honour to humanity, to refuse to recognize in one's disposition anything not justified by thought. This obstinacy is the characteristic of modern times, besides being the distinctive principle of Protestantism. (TWA 7, 27/ Hegel 2008, 15)

We should recognize of course, that at first sight there seems to be little Kantian about *Eigensinn*. Kantian ethics is built on the principle of rational submission to universality. There should be precisely nothing *eigen-* about Kantian moral action. Kant's ethics presents us with many theoretical ambiguities, about where the motivation or the impulse for ethical action could or should come from, but this is not one of them: if *Eigensinn* means an attitude of an agent, where a certain action (or the lack of it) of the agent is motivated purely by it being in some manner specifically *agent's own*, then this does not just fail

to meet the criteria for ethical action, it fails to do so blatantly, and is in fact the contrary principle.

And yet, in the preface to the *Outlines of Philosophy of Right*, Hegel's unfolding of *Eigensinn* – “to refuse to recognize in one's disposition anything not justified by thought” – does ring somewhat reminiscent of Kant's argument presented above, that freedom is possible only as autonomy, that is, as self-legislation grounded in reason. Of course, as Hegel explicitly adds, what he has in mind is characteristic of modern ethicality on a broader level: he traces this obstinate refusal of any external given authority all the way back to Luther. However, we can consider Kant's ethics to be simply the most precisely articulated expression of this modern ethical principle: how to deduce criteria for ethical action based on nothing but pure reason. At the very least it makes sense, therefore, to consider that the characterization “obstinacy, that does honour to humanity” – “*Eigensinn, der dem Menschen Ehre macht*” (ibid.) – covers also, if not exclusively, Kantian ethics.

Now judging from what we have said so far, this seems at first to be a surprising turn, even surprising from multiple directions: it is surprising that Hegel apparently mentions *Eigensinn* with approval. It is surprising that *Eigensinn* is related to Kantian philosophy and, finally, it is also somewhat surprising that here Hegel positively evaluates something that could be seen as a summary of the Kantian ethics.

One way to explain away this triple improbability would be to take into account the fact that we really have no guarantee that Hegel used the term *Eigensinn* strictly as a single concept, and it is reasonable to assume we are dealing with a more flexible notion. The occurrence of the term in the preface to *Philosophy of Right* does seem to be somewhat metaphorically exaggerated. The fact that we are dealing here with *Eigensinn* related to reason, not just mindless individuality, changes a lot. However, we cannot dismiss this repetition of the descriptor *Eigensinn* as meaningless coincidence. So the present chapter will attempt to construct a bridge between Hegel's general disapproval of *Eigensinn* and the programmatic invocation of this term in the preface to *Outlines of Philosophy of Right*. Through an examination of the relation to the notion of autonomy, we also hope to gain a better insight into Hegel's relation to Kantian practical philosophy in the process.

However, the path through Hegel's philosophy that I will chart in order to achieve this is not entirely straightforward. There is still another profoundly meaningful appearance to the notion of *Eigensinn* in Hegel, namely at the end

of the chapter on the dialectic of lordship and bondage in *Phenomenology*. The chapter ends with Hegel's brief mention of the *eigensinniger* bondsman (*Knecht*), which, as I will emphasize later on, is a distinctive form of bondsman. This is the instance of *Eigensinn* that I will focus on most, as the dialectic of lordship and bondage is a distinctive nexus of Hegel's thought that also stands in direct relation to Kant. In this respect I will be considering two contributions, McDowell's and Pinkard's that explore precisely this connection, and assess their validity, relevance and shortcomings. I proceed with extending the basis of this parallel reading by recounting some crucial steps in development of Hegel's thought in his Jena years leading up to *Phenomenology of Spirit* that decisively informed the passage on the lord and bondsman. Against that background I finally move to a detailed analysis of the passage with a focus on the figure of the *eigensinniger Knecht*. Then I will wrap up this progression by highlighting the role this figure played in Hegel's completion of systemic rearrangements that occurred in the Jena years.

Dialectic of Lordship and Bondage in the Kantian Framework

Now, it is not completely straightforward to see in the dialectic of lordship and bondage a polemic with or commentary on Kant. A violent struggle to the death seems at first sight to have little to do with the problem of following universalizable maxims. One distinctive reading of the dialectic of lordship and bondage that puts it into direct relation with Kant's theoretical philosophy was proposed by John McDowell (2003). McDowell is able to read the chapter in reference to the Kantian framework because he puts emphasis on the place of the struggle within the succession of the chapters of *Phenomenology*. Namely, in the run-up to the "Self-consciousness" chapter, the consciousness has in principle in the progression of the first few sections of *Phenomenology* achieved something close to the Kantian⁵ position of transcendental philosophy: the otherness, the ontological independence of empirical objects of consciousness has been abolished, and the objects are now ready at hand *for* self-consciousness.

McDowell takes this as a cue to consider the chapter primarily as Hegel's critical development of the Kantian dualist conception of self-consciousness

5 To be more exact, the real-world reference for the philosophical position of self-consciousness is very likely Fichte, and Hegel explicitly invokes the formula "I am I" at some point in the chapter (TWA 3, 138/Hegel 2013, 105). But we can consider this close enough for McDowell's purpose and our own.

and not as a lesson in political philosophy, as he perceives the chapter has been predominantly read (*ibid.*, 4). Self-consciousness involves mediation and movement, and therefore a minimal opposition emerges within it: a separation between its subjective and objective moments. Or in other words, opposition between self-consciousness proper as negative unity on one side, and on the other side what is self-consciousness conscious of – that is, the “whole expanse of the sensible world” (TWA 3, 138/Hegel 2013, 105), only that this sensible world is at this point nothing external, but already synthesized into the unified empirical existence of self-consciousness, or “life”. McDowell likens this opposition to the Kantian duality of apperceptive self and empirical self. He therefore reads the conflict that develops in the “Self-consciousness” chapter essentially as Hegel’s development of this Kantian duality. More precisely, we could say that he reads it as Hegel’s argument for the untenability of this duality, as the coexistence of both moments of self-consciousness cannot remain peaceful but gives rise to inevitable conflict. It is impossible to understand the self as *simply possessing* these two moments – according to Hegel, the unity of the self must assert itself in the form of one moment absorbing or negating the other.

This *internal* conflict of self-consciousness is for McDowell *the only* source of conflict in the chapter (McDowell 2003, 8-11). The most distinctive feature of McDowell’s interpretation is his curious insistence that the most dramatic image of this section, the struggle for life and death, should be read merely as an “allegory” (*ibid.*, 11) for a conflict – or opposition – that is internal to *one single* self-consciousness, namely precisely the opposition between the apperceptive and empirical selves. What the self-consciousness has set out to abolish is this internal otherness, and so it is prepared to go to war with itself.

To me, this seems an intriguing but ultimately unnecessarily radical interpretation of the chapter. A lot is lost if this scene becomes a mere allegory. In fact, it is hard to see how the dynamics of the struggle that Hegel presents could even develop if we were actually witnessing just an internal struggle of two poles of a single self-consciousness. Most notably, it is not clear how a single consciousness could instil *in itself* the feeling of *fear*, and it is still harder to understand what it would in this case mean for one moment of single consciousness to *submit to the other* for the sake of its own self-preservation. And on other hand, little is really gained with McDowell’s interpretative reframing. The internal conflict between two poles of self-consciousness that McDowell wants to see is undoubtedly there – but it is there also in the standard, literal reading of the struggle as a struggle between two consciousnesses. If we read

the chapter literally (and closely), we see that the conflict is in fact doubled, and Hegel explicitly states that when self-consciousness sets out to annihilate opposing self-consciousness (TWA 3, 148/Hegel 2013, 113) its purpose is also, or even primarily, to demonstrate total disregard for its own life (i.e. “empirical self”) and to thereby affirm independence of pure moment of self-consciousness. (i.e. “apperceptive self”). However, precisely for this reason the conflict between the two consciousnesses must itself be an actual conflict, not an allegory, and it is hard to imagine an allegorical image that would be intended as an allegory for what is in any case part of this image. The two perpendicular conflicts – the conflict *between two self-consciousness* and *the conflict within single self-consciousness* – precisely lose any sense if they are conflated into one.

So McDowell’s interpretation, it seems to me, somewhat recklessly overexploits an insight that is by itself nonetheless valid and sound, namely that the “Self-consciousness” chapter can indeed be considered as Hegel’s take on unresolved oppositions that he finds remaining in transcendental philosophy. In the final instance Hegel conveys a diagnosis that the apperceptive self is indeed in conceptual conflict with the empirical self. The pure point of the negative unity of self-consciousness does not lend itself conceptually to be smoothly attached to some determinate empirical being. It is only through the experience of a struggle to the death that this conflict is somewhat forcefully resolved, as the apperceptive self abandons its claim to independence.⁶

But McDowell’s reading does not quite exhaust the potential for readings of Hegel’s dialectic of lordship and bondage informed by fault lines of Kant’s philosophy. Our concerns in this chapter are in any case more related to practical philosophy, and so it will be useful for us to consider the contribution of Terry Pinkard, who presented a reading of dialectic of lordship and bondage that puts it into a particularly close relationship with the Kantian problematic of autonomy.

Pinkard’s idea is that struggle for recognition⁷ is supposed to present the beginning of Hegel’s solution to what he calls the “Kantian paradox” (Pinkard

6 Today, in less violently heroic times, this problem of the relation of the apperceptive and empirical selves becomes perhaps most acutely apparent in the form of the existential question “Why am I exactly this I, this particular being?”, which we have to admit one usually poses in precisely those circumstances where one’s existence is not under immediate threat.

7 This nexus of Hegel’s thought has been of course a very attractive object of inquiries and interpretations (for some other prominent ones, see Honneth 1996, 2008; Pippin 2000; and Kojève 1980).

2002, 226), the paradox of – to put it briefly – what law rules over the action of adopting/following laws. There seem to be only two options: either this legislative action is lawless and hence not free, or it must lead to infinite regress, where the subject’s adoption of any law requires it to be grounded in some higher law. The problem seems to call for an agent to split herself into two (ibid., 227). This splitting into two is of course precisely what happens in the “Self-consciousness” chapter, and that is the core component of Pinkard’s argument for such parallel reading. The inequality of consciousnesses that will be the result of the struggle for recognition will produce two actual separate instances of consciousness: one subordinated to the other and therefore susceptible to legislation. Of course, this development is not meant by Pinkard to directly resolve the paradox of autonomy: at this point the problem is solved simply by removing the pretence of autonomy on the side of the subordinated, acting consciousness. However, according to Pinkard this provides the principle, or at least the setting, of the resolution. It points to how Hegel’s solution to the Kantian paradox is essentially *social* – the splitting of the subject into two and the struggle for recognition are crucial conceptual moves towards that resolution. With the dialectic of lordship and bondage, the stage is therefore set for the eventual historical resolution of the paradox: the state of subjugation will eventually be overcome and the two consciousnesses will act as instances of authority *to each other* in a relation of equal, mutual recognition. Then the subject will be in a position to consider the laws she follows as her own.

Now we should note that this account is not uncontested. Sebastian Rödl (2019, 96–97) argues that this explanation fails immanently, and thus fails on the very terms it has set itself. It does not, according to Rödl, actually succeed in resolving the paradox, but only conceals it within the relation of two consciousnesses: if one consciousness is unable to give itself authoritative laws, then neither can it grant another consciousness the authority to do so. Instead, Rödl argues that the articulation of the paradox itself is a misunderstanding of Kant. If Kant is properly understood, there is no *act* of self-legislation, separate from law-following, and self-legislation is a transcendental description of *the form* of submission to the law. If giving oneself the law is not itself an action, a paradox does not occur.

So is the Kantian paradox a relevant assessment and criticism of Kant? The answer is not straightforward. As Tobias Rosefeldt (2023), for example, notes, Kant himself at times admitted the existence of Kantian paradox, or at least felt compelled to address this potential problem in the idea of self-given laws, such as in *Metaphysics of Morals*:

One can also bring this contradiction in light by pointing out that the one imposing obligation (*auctor obligationis*) could always release the one put under obligation (*subiectum obligationis*) from the obligation (*terminus obligationis*), so that (if both are one and the same subject) he would not be bound at all to a duty he lays upon himself. This involves a contradiction. (AA 6, 417/Kant 1991, 214)

Furthermore, the solution Kant offers at this point is not completely satisfactory. Kant avoids the paradox by affirming the strict difference between the legislating and law-abiding instance *within* the agent, which is precisely the distinction between the noumenal self and empirical self. The risk here is, however, that this solution introduced a relation between acting empirical self and legislating noumenal self, that is precisely *heteronomous*. We are then back where we started, the paradox of autonomy was solved for the price of covertly getting rid of autonomy altogether!

However, Kant does not fall into this trap in all presentations of his practical philosophy. In *Groundwork for Metaphysics of Morals*, unlike in *Metaphysics of Morals*, he is more careful to convey and emphasize the crucial element of the idea of autonomy: if autonomy is to have any sense *there can precisely be no separation between legislation and action*. There he even prefers to use the formulation (also highlighted by Rödl in his argument) that the will “*is its own law*” (AA 4, 440/Kant 1998, 47), which is notably something else than the *subject giving herself the law*. In this manner the paradox is avoided, and in fact we seem to get a notably different theory, where it is not really the agent that is autonomous, but the will itself.

However, the question we have to consider as it is most relevant for our purpose here, is not so much whether Kantian philosophy necessarily falls into the trap of the Kantian paradox, but how adequately does the Kantian paradox in fact describe *Hegel’s assessment of Kant*. Does it provide an adequate framing for understanding of struggle for recognition and dialectic of lordship and bondage, as Pinkard intends it to?

As mentioned above, it is not readily apparent that Hegel’s treatment of lordship and bondage is particularly closely related to Kantian problems – even if we accept McDowell’s framing of the chapter as responding to, essentially, the issues deriving from Kant’s theoretical philosophy, it is still another step to consider it a response to the problems of Kant’s practical philosophy. One could have some doubts about this, as there are places in *Phenomenology* which are much more definitely, almost explicitly, about Kant. Moreover, the

Kantian paradox is *not* the most prominent reproach that Hegel repeatedly and famously levels at Kant. That would instead be the reproach of “empty formalism”.⁸ Hegel’s argument is that the Kantian principle that the maxim of moral action should be universalizable without contradiction, and is by itself insufficient to provide guidance for any determinate course of action to the agent – nothing but tautologies can be produced by law of non-contradiction alone. Hegel famously attacks Kant’s own example of a deposit, and states that Kant’s argument that supposedly proves the contradiction of keeping and disavowing of a deposit that only the current possessor knows about cannot in fact be derived solely from the law of non-contradiction, but instead relies on a presupposition that is itself unaccounted for, namely the institution of property. No logical contradiction arises in keeping the deposit if we simply ignore the validity of the institution of property, and there is no logical necessity for the institution of property. This argument of Hegel’s already appears in the *Essay on Natural Law* and it persists in his thought in some form all the way to *Philosophy of Right*. But more importantly for us here, it appears also in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, albeit not quite in the context of dialectic of lordship and bondage. It appears in the section “Reason as testing laws” and represents the moment of passage from the “Reason” to “Spirit” chapters (TWA 3, 322).

But interestingly, that same section, “Reason as testing laws”, also contains a passage that *does* bear the structure of the Kantian paradox argument: Hegel also makes a point that laws that bind the subject cannot be questioned or tested by their subject in any way, because if they were that would already mean that they are posited as something conditioned by the subject, and therefore they do not truly and immediately bind the subject. Simply put, “[They *are*], and nothing more” ([*Sie sind*], *und weiter nichts*) (TWA 3, 321/Hegel 2013, 261). According to Hegel, such a simple unmediated givenness is the only possible mode of givenness of the laws if they are to be truly unconditionally binding for the subject. This argument represents a move to necessity

8 For an overview of the debate see Geiger (2007) or Stern (2012). If we sum up what is relevant for us here, it appears that while Kant could be defended against Hegel’s charges, but only at the cost of retreating from the stronger claims ascribed to him by Hegel. That is, it regardless of how accurate and charitable Hegel’s critique is if we measure it against Kant’s actual thought, it does appear to hit its mark with reference to what Hegel wants to get from Kant: a theory that would generally provide determinate guidance for what qualifies as good action in concrete situations. See also Ganzinger in this volume: “the unfolded formalism charge concerns the contradiction in the will test because it contains a tension between Kant’s insistence on acting from duty for the sake of duty and the requirement to act on a particular, obligatory end” (2024, 50), and Kobe’s different reading, for whom “the formality of the moral law thus merely points to a structural weakness that lies in Kant’s overall conception of reason” (2024, 107).

of the immediate unity of *Sittlichkeit*. However, it is not entirely clear from the text whether this is intended by Hegel as a self-standing argument by itself, because immediately afterward he proceeds to extend this argument by reiterating, as mentioned above, the critique of the example of a deposit, an instance of an “empty formalism” objection to Kant.

Hegel’s critique of Kant in the “Reason as testing laws” chapter therefore seems to be a combination of the two arguments: he allows, as Kant intended, that the principle of non-contradiction is indeed a principle that is binding to the subject. However, Hegel’s critique is that this is far too weak a principle to provide any useful determinate guidelines for action, i.e., anything more than tautologies. In order to make it work, further presuppositions – that are themselves not justified by the law of non-contradiction – have to be introduced (such as the existence and validity of the institution of property). These presuppositions, however, *do* fall to the challenge of the Kantian paradox, as they cannot be at the same time self-given and truly binding.

To sum up our findings up to this point: a convincing argument can be made that the chapter on self-consciousness and dialectic of lordship and bondage in *Phenomenology* is in fact a development of the Kantian structure of the self, as proposed by McDowell (but in a way that does not require ascribing to a single-consciousness thesis). Additionally, Pinkard’s suggestion that, in essence, Hegel’s philosophy – and that in *Phenomenology* in particular – can be summed up as an attempt to solve the Kantian paradox, does have some merit as an explanatory (and hence simplified) synopsis of Hegel’s philosophy. However, the precise manner in which he constructs this simplified synopsis leaves a lot of open questions. First, there is Rödl’s critique that the solution as Pinkard articulates it really does not work on its own terms. And apart from that, Pinkard’s shortcut is perhaps too short to have an optimal explanatory value. Effectively, his interpretation connects the beginning of the “Self-consciousness” chapter with the end of the “Spirit” chapter of *Phenomenology*, which makes one wonder what to do with the incredibly complex and sometimes perplexing development that happens in between, especially considering the fact that some version of the Kantian paradox makes an appearance at a specific point in the course of this development. Pinkard’s account does not really explain this, so it seems that an alternative, perhaps slightly more complex approach, would be informative.

In order to achieve that we should look closer into the development of Hegel’s thought in the period preceding *Phenomenology* in order to uncover more clearly how the criticism of Kant informed his philosophical position.

Systemic Place of Struggle for Recognition in Hegel's Jena Thought and the Emergence of Obstinate Individuality

One instance of Hegel's criticism of Kant stands in a prominent place in the *Essay on Natural Law*, and it is one that Hegel will repeat often in his later work: the criticism that the principle of non-contradiction and the universalizability of the maxims of Kantian ethics cannot bring about determinate action. The solution Hegel offers – and this is one of his signature moves – is the notion of *Sittlichkeit*, a concept that condenses the thesis that actually existing, acting subjects can only be understood as belonging to a pre-existent social totality, which pre-equips the subjects with given ethical laws (TWA 2, 464).

In subsequent Jena works Hegel switched to the method of immanent development of the system, and explicit references to works of other philosophers are mostly hidden, so traces of this criticism of Kant become to a certain extent obscured. However, it is not hard to pinpoint the precise place where Hegel attempts to overcome this same problem with the means of immanent development of the system. The way Hegel begins to construct his system involves a transition from the abstract treatment of individual consciousness that is developed all the way to the level of *Sittlichkeit*. In order to effect this passage, the logic of struggle for recognition is employed. Before *Phenomenology*, however, Hegel's argument about the struggle for recognition had already concluded with the point that it is impossible to achieve recognition in this manner. If the two self-consciousnesses clash with the aim of achieving recognition, they necessarily fail. Either both or one of them perish in the struggle – and there is no recognition as there is no one left to recognize or be recognized. Or one of the combatants surrenders – no thus recognition is possible either, since the surrendering self-consciousness is in no position to grant it. In early Jena texts, this argument is already sufficient for Hegel to make a systemic move to the level of *Sittlichkeit* (or, as he will soon start to call it, *Geist*). Isolated self-consciousness that claims to be absolute can only attempt to achieve recognition in struggle, at which it necessarily fails. Therefore there already has to be a pre-existing social structure, transcendental with regard to self-consciousness, that creates the conditions of possibility for recognitive relations (GW 6, 221). So, in support of the pertinence of a parallel reading of the struggle for recognition and the Kantian topic of autonomy, we can note that they occupy the same systemic position in Hegel's Jena thought – in both cases we are dealing with a failure that introduces the necessity of the passage to *Sittlichkeit*.

But this is not all. By the time he was composing *Phenomenology*, Hegel was facing an additional task. In the *Jenaer Systementwürfe 1805/06*, arguably the last truly big revision in Hegel's socio-political thought occurred. In spite of all the emphasis on the primacy of *Sittlichkeit*, modelled on the ancient Greek *polis*, which was defining feature of his thought in opposition to his contemporaries, he finally accepted that modernity irrevocably introduced the absolute value and right of the *individual*: "[everyone] comes to this obstinacy, that separated from existing universality, he is nonetheless absolute" – "[jeder] zu diesem Eigensinne kommt, vom daseienden Allgemeinen abgetrennt, doch absolut zu sein" (GW 8, 239).⁹

This means he took a step back from his initial programme announced in *Essay on natural law*, that proposed the conception of individual as necessarily immediately embedded in *Sittlichkeit*. Instead he now conceded that in modernity the individuality comes into its own right and rules as a supreme principle. This necessarily involves a loosening of hold of *Sittlichkeit* on the individual. The individual cannot at the same time consider herself absolute and immediately belong to *Sittlichkeit*.

At this point of development of his thought, Hegel thus ended up once again with the individual subject as the basic building block of his political philosophy, which is something that had been until then an eminent target of his criticism. Now he must somehow reintegrate the individual in his system, so as to not completely concede his project that he has been so far describing as "*System der Sittlichkeit*". This is also the point of a proper entry of the concept of *Geist* in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel sees that he must construct some looser form of synthesis of the individual and the social structure, now mediated instead of immediate. Immediate unity of *Sittlichkeit* is supplanted by mediated unity of *Geist*: "But a higher abstraction is necessary, a., a bigger opposition and culture (*Bildung*), a deeper spirit (*tieferer Geist*)" (ibid.).

The introduction of absolute right of individuality in his philosophy was not possible without sacrifices. In this theoretical decision, Hegel's youthful political ideal – namely more or less Rousseauian political ideal of a republican,

9 It is difficult to adequately render the minimalist meaning of the German *doch* in English. "Nonetheless" in a way already says too much, as the implication is that the individual would be without question "absolute", if she were *not* "separated from existing universality". This is decidedly *not* the case, as that would be just the strong conception of *Sittlichkeit*, which Hegel is here abandoning, where the individual is seamlessly blended into universality. I propose a reading – which I believe *doch* enables – that the individual is absolute precisely *because of* and simultaneously *in spite of* her separation from existing universality.

egalitarian, militant political unity¹⁰ – fell apart. Absolute right of the individuality, that is, a total sovereignty of the individual over herself, was for Hegel incompatible with individual's participation and empowerment in the political system. For Hegel, this is a necessary trade-off: One can be “in line” with community and participates in its political life – but only insofar it is the community that is absolute, and she as an individual is not. If individuals are absolute for themselves, on the other hand, they cannot come together in any kind of harmonious political community and are hence barred from political life proper. Therefore, somewhere around this point, immediately prior to the writing of *Phenomenology of Spirit*,¹¹ Hegel moves away from republican egalitarianism and moves towards much more liberal, but notably less democratic political model.

In the subsequent passages and fragments from the 1805/06 Jena lectures we can get some idea of what Hegel was thinking about next. His task was now to somehow integrate this newly introduced absoluteness of the individual into a coherent political unity, and we have seen that the harmonious egalitarian merging of *Sittlichkeit* is now impossible. This is no easy task, a fact that is openly on display at this relatively crude stage of the development of the system, when Hegel is still searching for ways to resolve this newly revealed opposition. We can gather an image of what further conceptual adjustments he deemed necessary as a consequence of the changed status of individual in the following rather fragmentary sidenote:

its self not in laws customs – [...] – gives up its existence – another world – as his own knows – in actuality only comes this externalization (*Entäußerung*) in view – this absolute universality stands precisely in opposition to immediacy. (Ibid., 239)

Here it is not hard to glimpse a preview of the topics that will go on to constitute large parts of *Phenomenology*, namely the chapters on unhappy consciousness and the alienated world of *Bildung*. It is a glimpse of all the efforts that the consciousness will have to go through in order to overcome this separation from universality that emerged.

However, the most significant hint for our present task appears a couple of pages later. After he explicitly distances himself from the conception of the

10 See for example Lukács (1976).

11 The shift is clearly already detectable in *Phenomenology*, with its powerful critical account of French revolution, which is also quite explicitly a critique of Rousseauian general will (TWA 3, 432/Hegel 2013, 357).

Platonic state (which still served as an entirely endorsed reference in the *Essay on Natural Law*), Hegel explains in a straightforward manner that this newly acquired individual freedom is something entirely internal:

the freedom of individuals in their immediate existence is lost, but their inner – freedom of thought – is retained. The spirit has been cleansed of immediate existence, it has entered in its pure element of knowing (*Wissens*), and is indifferent towards the existing individuality. (Ibid., 241)

First, let us note how the troubling and conflicting nature of the entry of the individual into Hegel's system is clearly stated here: mere moments after Hegel introduces modern individual freedom, his solution is to radically limit this freedom to the realm of thought – individual is free only insofar as she is indifferent to her existing (*daseiend*) individuality. Second, this is a formulation that very clearly foreshadows what will in *Phenomenology* be described under the label of *stoicism* (TWA 3, 155/Hegel 2013, 119), which of course appears directly as a resolution of the dialectic of lordship and bondage. We can take this as another piece of evidence that the dialectic of lordship and bondage is indeed directly intertwined with Hegel's attempt at resolving the problem of modern individuality.

With that in mind, we next look at dialectic of lordship and bondage passage in *Phenomenology* more closely, and see what it reveals in light of this pre-existing tension within Hegel's attempts at the construction of his philosophical system.

Eigensinniger Knecht

In *Phenomenology*, Hegel's exploration of the struggle for recognition and the resulting lord-bondsman dynamics goes further than in his preceding works. As in earlier texts, struggle fails to lead to mutual recognition, but now this is not the end of the story. There is one possible outcome of the struggle where we get something conceptually interesting, even though recognition fails. It is the outcome where, instead of fighting to the end, one consciousness is shaken to the core by the realization of its probable impending death: consciousness makes an additional step of reflection and realizes that the independence it intends to prove is not more essential to it than life itself, which it stands to lose. Therefore, consciousness forsakes its independence and accepts its subordinated position in relation to the victorious consciousness (which did not make this step of reflection). The subordinated consciousness – the bondsman – is now compelled to confront the world not in a relation of abstract negation,

but in determinate negation of the labour of formation. And through labour it forms itself as well. Unlike the passive lord, who remains stuck in the abstract negation of enjoyment of the world, the bondsman becomes the bearer of further development of spirit, the source of spiritual innovation of how to cope with its subordinated position.

However, what will be of most interest to us is that at the end of the chapter an often overlooked figure appears – the figure of the *eigensinniger*, the obstinate bondsman:

If it has not experienced absolute fear but only some lesser dread, the negative being has remained for it something external, its substance has not been infected by it through and through. Since the entire contents of its natural consciousness have not been jeopardized, determinate being still in principle attaches to it; having a ‘mind of one’s own’ (*der eigene Sinn*) is self-will (*Eigensinn*), a freedom which is still enmeshed (*stehenbleibt*) in servitude. (TWA 3, 155/Hegel 2013, 119)

This is rather surprising. Judging from the general direction of the argument regarding the bondsman, this passage is generally overlooked. But it seems to be the case that Hegel here in fact describes an *additional* figure, an alternative image of the bondsman at the outcome of the struggle for recognition. The wordplay *eigener Sinn* – *Eigensinn* is ostensibly a reference to an earlier statement:

Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence (*nur fremder Sinn zu sein schien*) that he acquires a mind of his own (*eigener Sinn*). (TWA 3, 154/Hegel 2013, 118)

Here, *eigener Sinn* still refers to the proper, progressive development of the figure of the bondsman: it denotes a reversal, where it turns out that *Sinn* in fact belongs to the labouring bondsman, not the commanding lord. In some cases, however, it appears, that this development is not completed and *eigener Sinn* degenerates into *Eigensinn*.

Eigensinn therefore appears here as a descriptor of the *false bondsman* or *insufficient bondsman*. Hegel seems to allow that even if the struggle ends with capitulation and submission, it is still not completely necessary that the submitting consciousness will assume the kind of attitude that will be fruitful for the progression of *Phenomenology*. Instead, he allows that a bondsman might capitulate even if he had not experienced liquefying “absolute fear (*Furcht*)”, but only “some lesser dread (*einige Angst*)” (TWA 3, 155/Hegel 2013, 119). In that case,

the experience of defeat and submission has not been quite so transformative. The bondsman's submission remains tactical, strictly an exchange of independence for life. The submission is not so total that it would include an effective erasure any feeling of injustice. This bondsman obeys – more or less – because he has to, but does not think he *should*. He takes all the freedom that he can get, albeit within the bounds of servitude. This is clarified by Hegel as the figure is brought to our attention again at the beginning of in the following chapter and compared to the evolved version of the progressive bondsman, the Stoic:

Self-will (*Eigensinn*) is the freedom which entrenches itself in some individuality (*Einzelheit*, translation modified) and is still in bondage (*innerhalb der Kechtschaft steht*), while Stoicism is the freedom which always comes directly out of bondage and returns into the pure universality of thought. As a universal form of the World-Spirit, Stoicism could only appear on the scene in a time of universal fear and bondage, but also a time of universal culture which had raised itself to the level of thought. (TWA 3, 157/Hegel 2013, 121)

So what is the reason why we encounter this figure of the *eigensinniger knecht* here? He does not truly move *Phenomenology* forwards, he is a dead end figure, just like the lord, but the latter is at least indisputably a necessary counterpart to the bondsman, whereas the obstinate bondsman is an unproductive side-step. If anything, with the appearance of this figure Hegel himself admits that developments in and around the struggle for recognition are not truly conceptually self-sufficient, since they rely on some level of “empirical contingency” as to how the bondsman will respond to his situation.

It probably would not be wrong to theorize that the figure of the obstinate bondsman serves for clarification: he is evoked to emphasize, by way of contrast, what is the most important feature of the true, progressive bondsman in his role as a vehicle of the development of spirit, which is, evidently, the abandonment of *Eigensinn*. But nothing would be clarified if this assumption of an *eigensinnig* attitude would not be a *real* option for the bondsman, and this is a significant addition to the interpretation. In fact, we could even surmise that this partial, *eigensinnig* mode of submission is the *more natural* choice, the more straightforward option for the bondsman. On the other hand, it is only in a “time of universal fear and bondage” (ibid.), that is only within a totalizing, all-encompassing (Roman) empire, which leaves no room for escape and where there are no alternative systems of justice (where one could imagine not being a bondsman) in sight that the bondsman has no other choice but to submit fully, with stoic indifference.

Eigensinn is thus a conservative option for the bondsman, the path of least resistance. It is an attempt to salvage as much as possible from the unfortunate situation in terms of power relations. In a sense, self-consciousness has been *eigensinnig* from the start – except that its *Eigensinn* was so all-encompassing that it made no sense for it to be named us such (or, alternatively, it was too all-encompassing to be noticed). Nothing existed for self-consciousness except as a temporary resistant object, whose independence was soon to be denied. But then self-consciousness met its match, some Other that it decided could not be overcome and this Other therefore became an authority that demanded submission. Then self-consciousness could only retain its striving for independence as *Eigensinn* proper, as *Eigensinn* implies the existence of some *Sinn* that is not *eigen*, as a rebellious independence within subordination, the impulse to save as much as possible, “freedom that entrenches itself in some individuality” (ibid.; translation modified). Hegel in principle says that the bondsman here cashes in too soon on the limited sovereignty that he establishes over material world by virtue of work.

Read with this emphasis, Hegel in fact pre-emptively blocks all the too direct Marxist appropriative readings of lord-bondsman dynamics. Yes, the bondsman emerges from the struggle for recognition with a good starting position for ultimate mastery of the world through the formative effects of labour, but it is crucial for the continuation of *Phenomenology* that he – namely the true, progressive bondsman – does not come to awareness of this and instead takes on himself the full weight of servitude, which pushes him into universality of thought.

This emphasis accords well with the point Zdravko Kobe (2015) has made regarding the outcome of the dialectic of lordship and bondage. According to the widespread view, the bondsman has been merely a reactive victim regarding his own servitude, which was in fact a consequence of a certain deficiency on his part, an opportunistic cowardice, with which he sacrificed his independence, and the rest of *Phenomenology* lays out a path for the bondsman to regain his courage. But as Kobe points out, there is more to the bondsman’s gesture. It requires an active sacrifice, we can say a certain courage, to abandon his independence, which the lord could not muster (ibid., 844). This nuance in interpretation becomes clearer when we recognize that Hegel does in fact leave some essential room for manoeuvre to the bondsman. A passive defeat in the struggle by itself is not enough, a historically progressive bondsman *makes himself* through his own decision.

Systemic Function of the Notion of *Eigensinn*

But our examination of the state of Hegel's systemic project immediately prior to *Phenomenology* gives us an additional insight into the strategic conceptual function of the struggle for recognition. Hegel has faced conflicting pressures on how to adjust his system after he accepted the absoluteness of the modern individual. Before *Phenomenology*, the systemic function that the struggle for recognition played was solely to disturb the self-sufficiency of the individual and immerse her into *Sittlichkeit*. But in the new setup that is more accommodating to individuality, it seems that the individuality of the original, natural state of self-consciousness must also somehow be preserved or carried over into the next stage of the system. In parallel, on the political level, the introduction of the *eigensinnig* individual for Hegel immediately precludes any simple egalitarian and democratic political solution – direct and seamless immersion in universality is now impossible. Therefore, a necessary consequence is that the political form that is able to accommodate *eigensinnig* individuals must involve some form of political subjugation. It is systemically beneficial, or even essential, that the struggle for recognition in *Phenomenology* produces this much more complex situation than before. In this section, I will attempt to give a more exhaustive picture of this dense and convoluted nexus of Hegel's thought: what transformations occurred in the system of Hegel's arguments and positions at the time of writing *Phenomenology*, and why.

We can approach this by tackling a notable puzzle concerning the structure of *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In the course of *Phenomenology*, we run through history three times, even though we are dealing with seemingly necessarily linear conceptual development. Hegel's explicit guidelines for how these historical time jumps should then be conceived are not the simplest thing to grasp. Regarding the relation of the first two courses through history – the first in the “Self-consciousness” and “Reason” chapters, and the second in the “Spirit” chapter (we will leave the third course in the “Religion” chapter aside here) – we learn that the “Self-consciousness” and “Reason” chapters are supposed to be “abstractions” of more concrete forms of Spirit (TWA 3, 325/Hegel 2013, 264). But at least at one point this explanation seems somewhat lacking. Namely, if we proceed in reverse historical order we can readily see how the analyses of action in the “Reason” chapter are correlated with the movement of enlightenment at the level of Spirit. We can see how the stage of unhappy consciousness is correlated with the alienated world of Christianity in the Middle Ages and how stoicism and scepticism fit together with apolitical

legalism of the Roman Empire. *However, the correlation between the beginning sections of the two courses through history appears far more mysterious.* What exactly is supposed to be the relation between the struggle for recognition and dialectic of lordship and bondage in the “Self-consciousness” chapter and the ancient Greek *Sittlichkeit* in the “Spirit” chapter?

The conclusions of both chapters lead to the historical situation of the Roman Empire, but it is difficult to find any analogy between the two transitions: they seem to be describing two different social/political/spiritual transformations. The ancient Greek ethical life is a supposedly harmonious immediate community that turns out to be blemished by an internal contradiction which dissolves it. The dialectic of lordship and bondage starts from a rather primeval state of non-social consciousness – we would not be far of the mark if we described it as a state of nature – and leads immediately to the state of total subjugation, characteristic for the Empire. It is not clear where there could be a conceptual-historical space for the beautiful and immediate ethical life of Greece in this transition. The Greek episode seems to be incompatible with both of these forms of consciousness at the beginning of the “Self-consciousness” chapter, and at the same time important and distinctive enough that it is surprising to see it abstracted away or jumped over in the first sequence of historical forms of consciousnesses.

The explanation for how these two historical sequences can fit together that makes the most sense to me is that in the Greek ethical life we in fact briefly witness *the society of collective lords*. There were also slaves in Greece, after all, which is something Hegel persistently leaves out of his accounts of the “beautiful ethical life”. In the more standard, non-philosophical, “materialist” socio-historical accounts of antiquity, the Greek and (early) Roman societies are after all not so radically different, and it is a remarkable and distinctive feature of Hegel’s philosophy of history that one of the biggest historical ruptures happens in between these two historical episodes. This is possible because this rupture is strictly correlated with Hegel’s switching the perspective of his account from the position of the ruling class (the whole development in the Greek chapter of *Phenomenology* takes place not just among the nobility, but entirely among royalty, and this seems conceptually necessary as in no other social position could the conflict between universality and individuality manifest itself so acutely and hence destructively) to the position of the subordinated classes.

Still, such an account leaves enough ambiguities (for example, is the internal differentiation that Hegel nonetheless ascribes to the Greek *Sittlichkeit*

– which is the cause of its undoing, after all – a variant of the lord-bondsman relationship or something else?) that it demands additional explanation on a metatheoretical level. We can trace it to the same developments of Hegel's thought that were outlined above. In short, here Hegel was working out how to bring together two of his different pre-existing lines of thought.

In previous Jena systems, we find an argumentative transition that proceeds directly from the struggle for recognition and its failure to the stage of *Sittlichkeit*. However, the true conceptual origin of the notion of *Sittlichkeit* seems to be anchored in Hegel's critique of Kant, which is how his argument proceeded in the *Essay on Natural Law*. In *Phenomenology* we then find an interesting, but still rather perplexing, combination of these two ideas. The progression from the failure of the struggle for recognition to *Sittlichkeit* is here interrupted by an exploration of the dialectic of lordship and bondage and the sequence of forms of consciousness that follow from it. Then, at the end of the "Reason" chapter, this sequence ends with consciousness almost explicitly on the position of Kantian practical philosophy ("Reason as giving laws" and "Reason as testing laws"). As we have seen above, at this point the progression we know from the *Essay on Natural Law* is repeated: reason realizes that self-legislation is impossible and that therefore a new and altogether different account of its development has to be given, one that takes into account that reason has all along been part of a larger, more concrete structure: spirit.

This means that the first part of the "Self-consciousness" chapter – the description of self-consciousness and the dynamics of struggle up to the fateful combat – should then be understood to be situated strictly *before* the emergence of spirit. Then, with the resolution of combat and establishment of lordship and bondage, spirit is in fact already established, but we – and spirit itself – do not yet know it. Instead, we are launched into a succession of partial self-recognitions of spirit, partial insofar as they pertain to the subject that still does not know itself as spirit, but understands itself in opposition to it. That would mean that at this point *Phenomenology* adopts a self-similar structure on two levels, where the "Self-consciousness" and "Reason" chapters as a whole stand in the same relation to the chapter on "Spirit" as every form of consciousness within the sequences stands to the next. It is only with modernity that this misrecognition is sublated. In support of such a reading we can note that the experience of the standpoint of reason at the end of the "Reason" chapter already very closely resembles the experience of spirit of itself as presented at the end of the "Spirit" chapter.

Hegel's progression in *Phenomenology* is therefore structured by both pressures: to uphold his criticism of Kant and to construct an alternative to it. Schematically, we could then explain why Hegel proceeds the way he does in the following manner. In the last instance there are only three different basic possibilities for how to conceive of the *submission of subject under some order*. One is Kantian autonomy: self-imposed submission under the order of reason. The second is Hegel's initial answer of *Sittlichkeit*, where the subject is always-already and constitutively belonging to the order. Criticism of the first option in favour of the second has been a persisting and characteristic feature – perhaps *the* characteristic feature – of Hegel's political philosophy. However, somewhere along the way, as we have seen, Hegel recognized that such an immediate unity of subject with the order does not adequately describe the modern subject, and so this strong version of the idea of *Sittlichkeit* was relegated from the status of a general theory of the subject to the status of a transitional historical form.

The third possibility is the only one that is left, namely a completely external submission of subject to the order, that is, a submission that happens as a result of violence and/or a threat of annihilation. Obviously, this is far less appealing. A political philosophy that aims at some sort of progressivism and conceptualization of freedom should provide something better than this. Nonetheless, this is where Hegel must begin: if the order neither originates in the subject nor the other way around, then the subject and the order must initially stand in an entirely external relation. The best we can expect then is to show how through a process the subject can gradually come to recognize itself in the order, which is broadly speaking the path of Hegel's (mature) political philosophy.

The necessary first step of such a process is to show that it is somehow possible to overcome this purely external relation between the subject and the order, which is not only a situation of blatant unfreedom, but philosophically uninteresting and seemingly static – unless it were possible for the submitting subject to abolish any internal distance to this external order, which is precisely the distinction between the *eigensinniger* bondsman and progressive bondsman that subsequently evolves in the figure of the Stoic.

We have seen in §3 that the appearance of the individual in the 1805/6 Jena system was somewhat paradoxical: the moment Hegel admitted the modern, *eigensinnig* individual into his political philosophy, he also needed to neutralize it as much as possible – he quickly (re)moved it into the non-threatening

realm of pure thought or knowledge. However, the formula of “freedom of thought” (GW 8, 241) (as opposed to actual freedom) was at this point still a source of potential ambiguity. The interpretation that first comes to mind is simply the dissociation of mind from the physical reality of the body in the world – “thinking one’s own thoughts” regardless of what one does with the physical body. This might seem at first sight to conform to the formula of stoicism, but it also conforms to the definition of *eigensinnigkeit* – and we have seen that these two are precisely (and decisively) not the same.

Hegel’s task in *Phenomenology* was therefore to establish and justify this distinction within the label of “freedom of thought”. This can only be clarified at the conceptual level of the logic of universality and individuality, which can also be read – to conclude the conceptual story arc we have been building here – as a pointed reworking of the Kantian framework.

At the start of the “Self-consciousness” chapter, self-consciousness exists prior to the distinction between the universal and individual: the individual is for herself immediately universal, insofar as it is abstract negation of the sensible world, or at least no other universal exists for it. We have seen with McDowell that this picture can be taken as Hegel’s rendering of the outcome of transcendental philosophy. Except that, and this is the Hegelian twist, this entails that the abstract negation is *active*, an act of negation, that is destruction/consumption – and this attitude, according to Hegel, merits precisely the label of “desire” (TWA 3, 139/Hegel 2013, 105).

The problem of Kantian ethics in general can be conceived of as a problem of individuation:¹² how does it occur that that the impersonal universal judgement “x is good” transforms into the action of *this* individual that “I do x”. Kant’s explanation involves a differentiation of faculties and the argument that the faculty of reason, which is inherently universal, can, in the competition for the role of the determining ground of the will, win out against the lower faculty of desire, which is contingent and empirical. So there is another dimension to the “Self-consciousness” chapter if we read it with reference to Kant. We could describe what Hegel does as *intellectualization* of lower faculty of desire. He reframes desire and its conclusion in consumption as the operation of abstract negation. Not only that, Hegel also claims that as long as we are dealing strictly with pure self-consciousness, this abstract negation is in

12 I take the idea for this framing from Christopher Yeomans (2015). However, Yeomans proceeds in a different manner and in his juxtaposition of Hegel’s and Kant’s practical philosophies focuses on the notion of *virtue*.

fact the *only possible* relation of self-consciousness in relation to the empirical world – “self-consciousness is *Desire* in general (*Begierde überhaupt*)” (ibid.).

For Hegel, then, the whole problem has the opposite direction than for Kant: it first needs to be explained how the individual even finds herself in this complicated relation to universality. The internal moral drama, characteristic of the Kantian practical subject, in fact requires much more complex setup of pre-suppositions. It seems that violence needs to be involved in order to splinter individuality from universality. Up until this point, there is no split between acting and judgment, which means an individual's inclinations are immediately also the right thing to do. This split is what occurs in the struggle for life and death, and in the subsequent capitulation and submission on the part of one of the combative consciousnesses: the losing consciousness must concede that it is something individual that is not at the same time the sole independent instance of universal annihilation of the empirical world. *Universality is now elsewhere*. This is the condition for the emergence of (merely) “existing universality (*daseienden Allgemeinen*)”, to use an expression we encountered in the 1805/06 Jena system, where it accompanied the introduction of the modern *eigensinnig* individual as its necessary counterpart (GW 8, 239).

On the other hand, what the consciousness which has gone through the truly liquefying, transformative fear of annihilation has gained in this experience is a perspective on abstract negativity *from outside*, so to say: this consciousness has found itself in the position *of the object* of potential annihilation. Unlike the victorious consciousness, defeated consciousness has now had the experience of abstract universality *as its object*, and at the same time, inversely, experience of itself as one of the objects about to be annihilated. To have such an experience of itself as an object means adopting a perspective external to one's individuality, that is, according to Hegel, “to *think*” (TWA 3, 156/Hegel 2013, 120) (the outcome McDowell wished to see is thus in fact reached, but not through quite the same mechanism as in his account). What we are dealing with here should more precisely be described as *freedom in thought*, as opposed to (*eigensinnig*) “freedom of thought”. And to be clear, the thought here is not merely a medium into which consciousness retreats when things do not go well in actuality: thought in fact only emerges *as a result* of leaving individuality behind.

The consciousness therefore faces a choice at the conclusion of the struggle for recognition. There is a necessary trade-off between universality and individuality: the obstinate bondsman retains the standpoint of individuality,

but for the price of universality, while the progressive bondsman forsakes individuality and submits to universality. And as this movement of *abandoning* individuality is here necessary, however fleeting, obstinacy is in fact a necessary (side)step in the development of consciousness. The obstinate bondsman plays precisely the role of the *evanescent, necessarily premature* appearance of the individual in the *Phenomenology*.

Conclusion

What have we then learned about relation of Hegelian *Eigensinn* to Kantian autonomy and how is *Eigensinn* involved in any Hegelian solving of the Kantian paradox, if at all? The account I provided in this chapter ultimately differs substantially from Terry Pinkard's (2002). While I remain in agreement that solving the Kantian paradox is indeed an informative framework for understanding Hegel's *Phenomenology*, I believe a more complex account is necessary to adequately explain the intricate structure of the book. Above all, Pinkard's simplification that through the struggle for recognition and lord-bondsman relation another consciousness becomes the source of validity of the law, seems to me to be a major oversimplification, given that the topic of the relation of two consciousnesses at that point in fact simply disappears from *Phenomenology* until the end of the "Spirit" chapter. As I argued in this chapter, the key conceptual result of the struggle seems to be instead that it *dislocates* the consciousness, that it introduces a split between individuality and universality and therefore triggers a complex dynamics of consciousness coming to terms with this separation. The account presented here also avoids Rödl's critique, as it does not rely on mutual recognition as a guarantor of the validity of laws. However, the conclusion I offer in exchange is more or less that Hegel simply does not resolve the Kantian paradox as understood in the strong sense of autonomy of the agent (I leave aside the Rödl's and Rosenfeldt's defence that recasts the notion of autonomy as autonomy of the will, as this does not seem to be the way Hegel reads Kant).

Hegel persists in his disagreement with Kant that there is no immediate and unproblematic passage from universality (law) to individuality (action). When such a pretence reoccurs in *Phenomenology* at the level of spirit, at the moment of French Revolution, the result is once again a destructive short circuit of the self-relation of spirit, structurally similar to the first appearance of self-consciousness – immediate self-negation. I suggest that the programmatic

statement *Eigensinn, dem menschen ehre macht* (TWA 7, 27 /Hegel 2008, 15) from *Outlines of Philosophy of Right* is an indication that this remains so even in Hegel's mature political philosophy, and it indicates how the subject's relation to order is never entirely or smoothly resolved.

The analysis of the obstinate bondsman presented above provides some delimitations on how the formula "the obstinacy (*Eigensinn*) that does honour to humanity" (ibid.) should be read. It becomes clear, for example, that the emphasis here is *not* that *Eigensinn* by itself is the defining principle of modernity. Rather, *Eigensinn* that is accompanied by *honour* is. With the direct connection between *Eigensinn* and the dialectic of lordship and bondage we established, the use of the word "honour" becomes more significant. Honour is after all something that is very much at stake in the struggle for recognition. The position of the obstinate bondsman is precisely a position that is *not* honourable. The lord has a certain straightforward, somewhat ignorant sort of honour. He was the one who was prepared to go to the end in the struggle, as were of course all the unfortunate participants in the struggle for recognition who actually did go to the end and perished along with their opponent. Then the true, progressive bondsman has a certain honour of the second degree – honour in the *sacrifice* of the lord-type of honour. Only the obstinate bondsman is the one who neither sacrifices anything nor risks sacrifice, and therefore there is little honourable about him. So the modern *Eigensinn* should be read as a species – unlikely, oxymoronic species – of *Eigensinn* in general: the species with honour. And note that only with distinct Hegelian emphasis on *Eigensinn* does this differential role of honour make any sense. Otherwise our culture can quite readily accept that to be obstinate (not surrendering, staying true to oneself, etc.) is generally honourable in some romantic sense.

This would make little sense if being *eigensinnig* in the modern sense would be easier than not, if it was the path of least resistance – as was the case with the obstinate bondsman. That the *Eigensinn* of modernity *does* merit honour apparently stems from the fact that *Eigensinn* is now not immediately self-referential, but disciplined and mediated through the medium of universality – thought. Of course, Hegel is hardly giving a *carte blanche* here as far as the political self-determination of the modern individual is concerned. His applauding of "*Eigensinn der dem Menschen Ehre macht*" (ibid.) appears at the very end of the preface to *Grundlinien* and follows a long rant aimed precisely against unrestrained appeals to political reality based on subjective ideals. "*Eigensinn der Ehre macht*" is instead supposed to characterize a much more restrained, patient theoretical approach of coming to terms with actuality, such

as the one he himself displays. And yet, it is still *Eigensinn*. The use of such a politically and morally charged label to describe an essentially theoretical approach cannot be overlooked.

What distinguishes so qualified an *Eigensinn* with regard to being “not willing to recognize in one’s disposition anything that is not justified by thought” (ibid.) from autonomy in the Kantian sense of freedom as submission to rational, self-given practical law, condenses Hegel’s final reception of Kantian ethics. The difference between the two precisely indicates Hegel’s contention that political life cannot be completely reduced to morality. The terms of participation in political collectivity are not such that they could be expected to be completely internalized by the individual. The word *Eigensinn*, unlike autonomy, implies the existence of some external instance, against which one is *eigensinnig*: *Eigensinn* has an outside, a context from which it separates itself. It would not make sense to speak of “not being willing to recognize what is not justified through thoughts”, if one would not be regularly enough presented with actual injunctions for such recognition, not all of them legitimate. That is, the individual’s striving towards rational internalization and integration of principles that she is supposed to follow is never finalized into a seamless integration in the order within which she as an individual would immerse herself. At least a minimal difference is preserved, so that the individual’s compliance with the order is still *her* compliance, her individual act. Modern *Sittlichkeit* is characterized by the perpetual agonistic duplication of universality. There is no guarantee that the opposition which accompanied Hegel’s introduction of the *eigensinniger* modern individual “separated from existing universality, he is nonetheless absolute” (GW 8, 239) is ever resolved. *Eigensinn* describes an individual’s immediate claim to universality. However, in the process of actualizing this universality she must inevitably confront and somehow come to the terms with “existing universality (*daseienden Allgemeinen*)” (ibid.). The Hegelian version of autonomy is thus combative and conflictual.

We have to imagine a conceptual spectre of the obstinate bondsman still present in the background of the modern *Eigensinn*, somehow along with the true bondsman-like submission to the order of reason. Instead of a stubborn, thoughtless affirmation of individuality as a coping mechanism *within* the actual subordination – the bondsman’s obstinacy – the modern subject submits to the universality of thought, but universality of thought itself is employed in service of the affirmation of individuality – a submission, but a *submission against*.

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