

Self-C Notes

1. **Essential self-consciousness.**

From basic distinction between what one is *in* oneself and what one is *for* oneself. (“en soi” and “pour soi”)

This is the idea of creatures whose normative statuses are attitude-dependent.

Hegel takes this idea to be at the core of modernity.

Here he explores the metaphysics of beings whose statuses *are* attitude-dependent.

This is a kind of *practical* self-consciousness. *Theoretical* self-consciousness is dependence of attitudes (what one *takes* oneself to be) on statuses (what one is *in* oneself).

Self-consciousness can be thought of to begin with as consciousness of one’s self—a matter of being *for* oneself what one is *in* oneself. In the idiom I have been recommending, this is to have one’s normative *statuses* appropriately reflected in one’s normative *attitudes*. It is to acknowledge the responsibility and authority one actually has. We might think of this as *theoretical* self-consciousness. The self-constitutive achievement of existential identification makes visible a complementary dimension of *practical* self-consciousness. For in this case, statuses reflect attitudes, rather than the other way around. It is by practically *taking* oneself to be a certain kind of self, identifying with one rather than another element of one’s statuses and attitudes, that one *makes* oneself into a different kind of self, alters one’s status. What one is *in* oneself is *responsible to* (in Hegel’s terms, dependent on) what one is *for* oneself, one’s practical attitude of identification. Each of the theoretical and the practical dimensions of self-consciousness yield something that the self is *in and for itself*.

2. Achieved by **identification**.

What is essential to what one is in oneself is what one identifies with. This is the self-defining practical attitude.

Q: What does one have to *do* to count thereby as identifying with, e.g., an attitude?

3. Identification by **risk and sacrifice**.

Making oneself more than just a living being by *taking* oneself to be more than just a living being.

Bushido and seppuku.

H quote: only by risk of life get truth of personhood.

Q: What *would* one risk one’s life for? That, he is saying, is the person-defining question.

4. **Life-and-death struggle.** In the allegory, this is the form risk of life for commitment takes—the decisive step in instituting normativity.

Q: Why does practical identification as risk-and-sacrifice take *this* form?

5. Implicit in desire, by its nature, is a **second-order desire**: the desire that things should be *in* themselves, just what they are *for* the desirer.

That is the desire that one's desires be satisfied, just because they *are* one's desires.

To see that such a second-order desire is implicit in what it is to be a (first-order) desire it suffices to reflect that it is as correct to say that all particular *desires* are united in their common aim at *satisfaction* as it is to say that all particular *beliefs* are united in their common aim at *truth*. That second-order desire was the desire that one's desires be immediately and transparently constitutive. It is the desire that one have the power (being transformed, as we will see, into the normative shape of authority) to make things so by taking them to be so.

6. The **activity associated with this desire** (cf. tripartite structure of orectic proto-consciousness) **is the life-and-death struggle** with any and every other subject of that same desire. The sort of **sovereignty** (cf. Descartes on willing [seeming and trying]) aimed must be unique. That is struggling to make it be *in* itself what it is *for* the sovereign desirer: an object for whom and in whom only the sovereign desirer's desires are efficacious.

7. Result of LADS is the **Master/Servant** (Herr/Knecht) **normative-recognitive structure**. The result of the struggle is

“two opposed shapes of consciousness; one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be **for itself**, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be **for another**. The former is master, the other is servant.” [*PhG* §189]

What each is *in* itself (its status) is dependent on (responsible to) what it is *for* a consciousness (attitudes).

Here we see distinction of two sorts of attitude—what a consciousness is *for* a consciousness: what it is for *itself* (attitude of **acknowledging** or claiming responsibility or authority) and what it is for *another* (attitude of **attributing** responsibility or authority).

Master's attitudes are authoritative for what he is, *and* for what Servant/subordinate is—according to *both* the Master *and* the Servant.

8. The practical conceptions of normativity that animate the Master/Servant structure are those of **pure independence and pure dependence**: authority without correlative responsibility and responsibility without correlative authority.

Master takes himself to be an immediately, transparently constitutive taker: one whose attitudes by themselves (immediately, i.e. without needing to be suitably complemented) institute statuses with the very same contents as the attitudes, i.e. actualize the virtual objects of those attitudes.

9. Hegel's use of the Master/Servant allegory implicitly makes three very strong and controversial claims:

- a) He is explaining **how power relations take a normative form**.
- b) That normative form of power relations is **the asymmetric subordination-obedience structure**.
- c) The critique he makes *in* the allegory accordingly extends to all subordination-obedience structures of normativity.

10. It *seems* that the Master gets what he wants, on side of subject (recognition as M) and of object (immediate, to him, satisfaction of desires).

11. Diagnosis: The Master's original mistake. what he thinks he has done and what he actually has done (a real achievement.)

a) The victor takes it that his victory indicates *success* in satisfying the desire that motivated the life-and-death struggle in the first place. That second-order desire was the desire that one's desires be immediately and transparently constitutive.

b) The victor takes it that by *taking* himself to be an immediately and transparently constitutive taker in the way he has, that is by existentially identifying with his claiming that status, and by having come through the life-and-death struggle victorious, he has immediately and transparently *made* himself be such a taker, and so has successfully instituted that status. That is what the master is *for* himself, and he takes his victory to have successfully transformed that status from being the merely *virtual* object of his attitude (the original second-order desire) to being *actualized* as the status that is what he is *in* himself.

c) Though he is wrong about what he has achieved, the victor in the life-and-death struggle is not *simply* deluded. He *has* substantially transformed himself by staking his life, by existentially identifying with his practical self-conception. In so doing he raised himself above being in himself simply a desiring living being. For he succeeded in making himself *essentially self-conscious*, someone such that what he is *for* himself is an essential component of what he is *in* himself. As such, he is subject to a distinctive new kind of self-development. For changing what he is *for* himself changes what he is *in* himself. As an essentially self-conscious being, he is now an essentially *historical* being. The act of practical self-identification, he performed was *constitutive*. It was a self-taking that was a self-making. In this sense, the master is right to think of himself as a constitutive taker.

d) In understanding the significance of his victory in terms of Mastery, the victor in the life-and-death struggle has misunderstood what he has actually succeeded in doing. He has overgeneralized his genuine achievement, which was making himself essentially self-conscious in himself by his practical attitude of existentially identifying with what he is *for* himself. What he successfully made himself be in himself—the status his attitudes instituted—is not all of, but only a part of, what he was *for* himself. He has immediately instituted a status by adopting an attitude. But that falls far short of the sort of sovereignty he desired his attitudes to have. In misunderstanding his achievement, the master misunderstands himself.

12. **Metaphysical irony** of M: dependence on S on both side of object, and of subject. "Das Wirkung des Schicksals" (from "The Spirit of Christianity")—the **efficacy of fate**.

Here is the irony of Mastery: the master has not only made himself essentially self-conscious, he has achieved a genuinely *normative* status—crossing the boundary between the merely living and the genuinely normative. The master-servant relation is a genuinely normative structure of subordination and obedience. And it is so *because it is* what the master denies: a *recognitive* relation, in which (asymmetric) recognitive attitudes are suitably complemented (albeit asymmetrically), so as to institute genuine (if defective) normative statuses. In fact the master is the master only insofar as he is recognized *as* the master by the servant. The servant exercises recognitive authority over the master, who is normatively dependent upon, responsible to, the servant for his status—which is a *normative* status just because and insofar as it is instituted by recognition. But the master does not recognize the recognitive authority of the servant. And on side of *object*, the Master is also totally dependent on the Servant.

13. The essential **symmetry of authority and responsibility in recognitive context**:
Chess player.
Celebrity.

14. **From independence to freedom** (as reciprocal authority and responsibility). C.f. hierarchical organizations and mismatch of auth and resp.

Freedom and recognitive vulnerability (dependence, responsibility to).

In recognizing other subjects, that is, in attributing recognitive authority to them, I make myself vulnerable, in the sense that my actual status depends not only on my attitudes, but also on the attitudes of those I recognize. Just so, in representing something, in attributing to it the representational authority constitutive of being represented, I make myself vulnerable to error, in the sense that the correctness of my representing depends not only on how I represent things, but on how it actually is with what only thereby counts as represented. This vulnerability to the other, whether on the side of subjects or of objects, this acknowledging one's responsibility to and the authority of the other, opens up the possibility of *discordance* between one's commitments. On the recognitive side, the discordance is incompatibility between the virtual statuses one acknowledges or claims and those that are attributed by those one recognizes. On the cognitive side, the discordance is between the contents of one's own attitudes.

Love. (Sartre: The desire to *compel* the other *freely* to recognize me in the loving way.)

15. **Servant works, labor**, overcoming immediacy (c.f. exp of error).

Normative, abstract, ideal relation to desire, and concrete relation to things.

This is source of determinate contentions.

Laboring subordinate is the subject of all future history.

Through work, however, the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is... Desire has reserved to itself the pure negating of the object and thereby its unalloyed feeling of self. But that

is the reason why this satisfaction is itself only a fleeting one, for it lacks the side of objectivity and permanence. **Work**, on the other hand, **is desire held in check**, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms and shapes the thing. The negative relation to the object becomes its form and something permanent, because it is precisely for the worker that the object has independence. **This negative middle term or the formative activity is at the same time the individuality or pure being-for-self of consciousness which now, in the work outside of it, acquires an element of permanence.** [195]

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 that he acquires a mind of his own. [196]

16. Mastery in thought as **Stoicism**. Determinate content goes missing.

Consider Stoicism:

Its principle is that consciousness is a being that *thinks*, and that consciousness holds something to be essentially important, or true and good only in so far as it *thinks* it to be such. [198]

There are three ways one can appeal to the sovereign authority of consciousness as taker or recognizer to try to evade what is implicit in such an experience. One can deny that in vomiting one has in practice classified what was eaten as disgusting and not nourishing. That is, one can alter the practical significance of this response to one's activity. Or one can deny that in eating one has in practice classified what was eaten as food. That is, one can alter the significance of one's activity. Or one can deny that the two concepts one has applied to one thing by eating it and vomiting it back up are incompatible. This budget of options is what the Stoic is expressing in saying for instance that although my performance had the consequence of causing me pain, this forces me to acknowledge that things are not just as I was taking them to be in producing that performance *only* if I acknowledge that pain is a bad thing, or that my performance expressed an expectation or commitment incompatible with its painfulness. Since it is within my power, as free in thought, to withhold such acknowledgments, it is within my power to deny the independence of things (their authority over my takings) or their constraint on me (my responsibility to them), in spite of my experience.

The content, it is true, only counts as thought, but also as thought that is determinate...[201].

Consciousness does indeed destroy the content as an alien immediacy [Sein] when it *thinks* it; but the Notion is a *determinate* Notion, and this determinateness of the Notion is the alien element which it has within it...

The True and the Good, wisdom and virtue, the general terms beyond which Stoicism cannot get, are therefore in a general way no doubt uplifting, but since they cannot in fact produce any expansion of the content, they soon become tedious. [200]

17. Mastery in thought as **Skepticism**. Determinate content goes missing.
What Skepticism causes to vanish is not only objective reality as such, but its own relationship to it, in which the 'other' is held to be objective and is established as such...
What vanishes is the determinate element, or the moment of difference, which, whatever its mode of being and whatever its source, sets itself up as something fixed and immutable. [204]

18. Unhappy Consciousness (UHC).
[T]he duplication which formerly was divided between two individuals, the lord and the bondsman, is now lodged in one. The duplication of self-consciousness within itself, which is essential to the Notion of Spirit, is thus here before us, but not yet in its unity: the *Unhappy Consciousness* is the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being. [206]

The conceptions discussed under the rubric of the Unhappy Consciousness move from *claiming* or acknowledging authority as mastery to *attributing* it. It does this by contrasting its own particularity with the abstract form of normativity—universality—in general. The modern idea that authority is dependent on (responsible to), or even instituted by normative attitudes of attributing (or claiming-acknowledging) is no part of these forms of self-consciousness. Normative statuses simply *are*. The task of selves as subjects of normative attitudes is to acknowledge the responsibility of their attitudes towards this objective authority. This is an attempted return to premodernity.

Devotion [Andacht]. Its thinking as such is no more than the chaotic jingling of bells, or a mist of warm incense, a musical thinking that does not get as far as the Notion. [217]

Devotion, Service, and Renunciation (foreshadowing Confession).

19. On to Reason. VB for next week, then VC for the following week. Skip VA: Observing Reason.