

A comparison between the hegelian notion of recognition and the aristotelian notion of friendship by virtue

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ABSTRACT: In the present article a parallel is established between the Aristotelian notion of friendship by virtue and the Hegelian notion of recognition. In a first stage the friendship by virtue is studied, paying especial attention on the explanation regarding the reasons why a virtuous man needs friends and analyzing the different interpretations on the issue. Following this analysis of friendship by virtue we have the explanation of the way Hegel describes and applies, in the master-slave dialectic, the notion ‘recognition’. Concluding the study, through assembling the collected information on the two topics the main similarity between the friendship by virtue and the notion of recognition is identified and presented.

Key words: Friendship. Virtue. Recognition. Master-slave dialectic.

RESUMO: No presente artigo é estabelecido um paralelo entre a noção aristotélica de amizade pela virtude e a noção hegeliana de reconhecimento. Em um primeiro estágio estuda-se a amizade pela virtude, tendo especial na explicação das razões pelas quais um homem virtuoso precisa de amigos e analisando as diferentes interpretações sobre o tema. Segue-se a essa análise da amizade pela virtude a explicação do modo como Hegel descreve e aplica, na dialética do senhor e do escravo, a noção ‘reconhecimento’. Para concluir o estudo através da reunião das informações coletadas sobre os dois tópicos procede-se à identificação e apresentação da principal semelhança entre a amizade pela virtude e a noção de reconhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Amizade. Virtude. Reconhecimento. Dialética do senhor e do escravo.

This text intends to draw some relations between the way Aristotle works with the idea of a friend by virtue as an ‘other self’ and the Hegelian notion of recognition. First of all, we will present and interpret what Aristotle has to say regarding the friendship by virtue and of the reasons why a virtuous man needs friends. Thereafter, we will expose in which manner Hegel works with the notion of recognition in the master-slave dialectic, highlighting the essential role performed by the concepts of ‘truth’ and ‘certainty’. Finally, we will put together the obtained conclusions in order to

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indicate which is the common element to both authors.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle analyzes the friendship issue throughout two books, presenting many considerations on the matter and establishing a distinction between the kinds of friendship, the friendship by pleasure, the friendship by utility and the friendship by virtue, that he understands as being the perfect kind of friendship, since in this kind of relation the individuals ‘wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves’.¹ Since one individual desires the good of the friend due to the nature of the friend, ‘their friendship lasts as long as they are good’², as long as are good the individuals that establish this bond of friendship. After having presented, through many chapters, the characterization of the elements of the kinds of friendship, in the fourth chapter of the book IX Aristotle concludes that the ‘friend is another self’.³ Our purpose, in studying Aristotle’s arguments, will be to determine in which manner he justifies the above quoted assertion, aiming to indicate what means for an individual to be ‘another self’, as well as which are the reflexes of this kind of friendship for the involved.

In the fourth chapter of the book IX Aristotle presents a first aspect regarding the friendship by virtue, taking as starting point the idea that the virtuous man considers the existence as something valuable.

[The good man] wishes himself to live and be preserved, and especially the element by virtue of which he thinks. For existence is good to the good man, and each man wishes himself what is good, while no one chooses to possess the whole world if he has first to become some one else [...]; he wishes for this only on condition of being whatever he is; and the element that thinks would seem to be the individual man, or to be so more than any other element in him. And such a man wishes to live with himself; for he does so with pleasure, since the memories of his past acts are delightful and his hopes for the future are good, and therefore pleasant.⁴

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¹ NE 1156b7-8. Throughout this paper we will utilize the following translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, always referred with the abbreviation NE: ARISTOTLE. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by W. D. Ross and revised by J. O. Urmson. In: BARNES, Jonathan. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995. v. 2. In the other two kinds of friendship the bond that the individuals establish is transitory, ‘it is not as being the man he is that the loved person is loved, but as providing some good or pleasure’, consequently, ‘such friendships [...] are easily dissolved, if the parties do not remain like themselves; for if the one party is no longer pleasant or useful the other ceases to love him’. (NE 1156a18-23).

² NE 1156b12.

³ NE 1166a32.

⁴ NE 1166a17-26.

The first argument in this excerpt can be organized in the following manner: since the good man wishes what is good, and his life, the life of an individual that is virtuous, is included among the good things, he desires his life. Now, since the good man that desires his life needs to desire something, he desires his life, but not as a mere existing as a living being, he desires his life, his existence, as a virtuous man. Due to this specific trace of the desire it can be asserted that the man desires the ‘element that thinks’, since it is in this element that he finds that which is particular to him. It is because of the ‘element that thinks’ that the man is what he is, he is a virtuous man because of his actions, that are guided by his reason, therefore, the virtuous man desires his life and desires to keep existing, as a virtuous man, because he desires for him that which is good, and he recognizes his existence as something good.

After having explained the reasons for a man to desire his existence, Aristotle describes some constitutive elements of this relation that a man has with himself. The good man is the one who ‘grieves and rejoices, more than any other, with himself; for the same thing is always painful, and the same thing always pleasant, and not one thing at one time and another at another; he has, so to speak, nothing to regret’.⁵ Therefore, the relation that a good man establishes with himself is not accidental. A friendship with oneself is not transitory, being able to be present or not, because of an accidental, non-controlled, pleasure or pain, that can not coincide with the expectations. The good man, always when he is pleasant, he is pleasant with himself, and when he is grieving, he is grieving with himself. We saw that in the other kinds of friendship the limit of the friendship and that which will determine its end will be the presence or lack of that pleasant element that has started the friendship.⁶ In the situation of the friendship of the good man with himself, there is never a disappointment, there is never a conflict of interests, and due to this the friendship that this man establishes with himself is stable and everlasting.

The particular kind of friendship in which the individual always finds in the ‘other’ (in this case, in the ‘element that thinks’) that which he was expecting, also can be found in another kind of relation, the one that establishes the ‘friendship by virtue’. Aristotle asserts:

⁵ NE 1166a27-29.

⁶ See the texts quoted in the footnote 2.

[...] since each of these characteristics [the characteristics quoted in the excerpt 1166a27-29] belongs to the good man in relation to himself, and he is related to his friend as to himself (for his friend is another self), friendship too is thought to be one of these attributes, and those who have these attributes to be friends.⁷

The thesis defended in this excerpt is that friendship is one of the attributes that belong to the good man, to his existence as a good man. The justification of this thesis can be found when we characterize the individual that would be the friend of a good man. Since the good man is the individual that wants to exist because he wishes to keep practicing and contemplating virtuous actions, and the individual that is his friend is equally a good man, therefore this individual can be a source, for the good man, of virtuous actions that will be contemplated by him. The good man relates to himself, as a friend of himself, because of the virtue of his actions. Since the other individual practices actions that are similar to the ones practiced by the good man, this good man, that wishes to contemplate virtuous actions and that is friend of himself because of these actions, will also, due to the same reason, be a friend of this individual.

The good man and his friend (in a friendship by virtue) have the same attributes, and due to this the good man will desire to have this individual as his friend, by the same reason that lead him to desire to be friend of himself. Because of this similarity between the friendship with oneself with the friendship with another good man, we can assert that the friendship with other virtuous men is something that the good man must desire. The good man desires to be friend of himself, he desires to be friend of 'his self', since he recognizes in this 'self' pleasant attributes. By the same reason, when a good man meets another individual that presents the same characteristics that 'his self' presents for him, the good man will desire to be friend of this individual, and will see in him 'another self', he will see himself, as an individual that has certain attributes, in another individual.

Once established that friendship is something truly good for a virtuous man, in the chapter 9 of book IX Aristotle returns to study the subject friendship as a means for seeing oneself in another individual. After having indicating that a happy man will need friends because they are a good in itself⁸, we have the presentation of an argument

⁷ NE 1166a30-33.

⁸ See NE 1169b3-22.

regarding the need of having friends in order to contemplate virtuous actions. Aristotle begins with an established fact, the fact ‘that happiness is an activity’.⁹ Taking into account that the happiness of a virtuous man will consist in practicing virtuous actions, since these acts lead him to happiness, and considering that ‘if a thing’s being one’s own is one of the attributes that make it pleasant’¹⁰, we are able to conclude that for a good man it will be pleasant to observe the virtuous actions that he practices. Regarding the above quoted assertion, that the possession of something for someone is one of the aspects that make this something pleasant, we can think that one of the justifications for this assertion relies on the following reasoning: since the virtuous man is the one that wishes to practice virtuous actions, and taking into account the fact that practicing these acts is seen by him as something pleasant, the virtuous man will feel pleasure in observing this ‘thing’, possessed by him, that materializes and shows him the virtuous act practiced by him.

Returning to the main argument, once established that the happiness of the virtuous man consists in practicing virtuous actions and also observing the actions that he practiced, we may consider the following excerpt:

[...] and if we can contemplate our neighbors better than ourselves and their actions better than our own, and if the actions of virtuous men who are their friends are pleasant to good men (since these have both the attributes that are naturally pleasant) – if this be so, the blessed man will need friends of this sort, since he chooses to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own, and the actions of a good man who is his friend have both these qualities.¹¹

The main element in this excerpt is the need of friends in order ‘to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own’. The friends became essential to the virtuous man’s happiness because his happiness does not involve only the practice of virtuous actions, but also the contemplation of virtuous actions, practiced by his similar and he himself. When a virtuous man has a friend that is his similar, he has the opportunity of observing virtuous actions practiced by an individual that is *as* he is, and the contemplation of these actions is something that gives him pleasure. When the virtuous man observes his friend acting virtuously, he observes his friend *as if* he was observing himself.

⁹ NE 1169b28.

¹⁰ NE 1169b32-33.

¹¹ NE 1169b34-1170a3.

Summarizing, this is the explanation that Aristotle will offer, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, regarding the benefits of contemplating the virtuous actions of friends. Nevertheless, the issue friendship was also studied in another book, the *Magna Moralia*, and in this work we can find some information that helps to better understand the benefits that a virtuous man enjoys because he has friends that are similar to him regarding virtue, as well as the reasons why a man needs friends in order to properly contemplate his own actions.

If, then, when one looked upon a friend one could see the nature and attributes of the friend, ... [There is a lacuna in the text] such as to be a second self, at least if you make a very great friend, as the saying has it, 'Here is another Heracles, a dear other self'. Since then it is both a most difficult thing, as some of the sages have said, to attain a knowledge of oneself, and also a most pleasant (for to know oneself is pleasant) – now we are not able to see what we are from ourselves (and that we cannot do so is plain from the way in which we blame others without being aware that we do the same things ourselves; and this is the effect of favour or passion, and there are many of us who are blinded by these things so that we judge not aright); as then when we wish to see our own face, we do so by looking into the mirror, in the same way when we wish to know ourselves we can obtain that knowledge by looking at our friend. For the friend is, as we asserted, a second self. If, then, it is pleasant to know oneself, and it is not possible to know this without having some one else for a friend, the self-sufficing man will require friendship in order to know himself.¹²

The explanation concerning the need of friends in order for the virtuous man to be able to be happy was the target of discussion in the interpretations of the issue presented by Richard Kraut and John Cooper, and their debate is essentially connected to the excerpt above quoted. According to Cooper, this excerpt contains the answer to the question regarding the reason why a virtuous man needs other individuals, his similar, in order to be conscious of himself, in order to know himself.¹³ The reason for

¹² ARISTOTLE. *Magna Moralia* [Trad. STOCK, St. G.] In: BARNES, Jonathan. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995. v. 2. 1213a10-26 From now on this work will be referred with the abbreviation MM.

¹³ It is true that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes about a 'consciousness' of the existence, whereas in the above quoted excerpt of the *Magna Moralia* he is working with the notion 'knowledge'. Although there is a difference between knowledge and conscience, we understand that the most relevant element for the present question can be found in the assertion presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1169b34-1170a3, already quoted, in which the man not only aims to have the conscience of the virtuous actions, but also intends to know them, to contemplate them. It is also proper to mention the analysis done by Cooper in which he sustains that the excerpt of the *Magna Moralia* in which we find the term 'knowledge' instead of 'conscience' presents the knowledge as including the mere conscience and also possessing more elements than the conscience: 'one can be conscious of one's self as an entity active in one's affairs even without knowing very fully or explicitly what kind of person one is'. COOPER, John

the need of friends is indicated in the fact that ‘we blame others without being aware that we do the same things ourselves’¹⁴, and from this element Cooper is able to assert the following:

[...] people tend to notice faults in others that they overlook in themselves; and they are equally inclined to attribute to themselves nonexistent virtues. Thus there is a double tendency to deny the presence in oneself of what one recognizes in others as faults and to claim for oneself virtues that one does not really have at all.¹⁵

In the two excerpts above referred we can find the solution to the problem regarding the reason why a virtuous man needs friends. The virtuous man needs friends because, although he is virtuous, he is liable to make mistakes, and if he has friends that are virtuous as he is, he will have better chances of perceiving his own mistakes and to avoid that new mistaken acts be practiced. A different reason from the one presented by Cooper was proposed by Kraut, that asserted the following:

[...] why does Aristotle think that we can contemplate our friend’s actions better than our own? His idea, I suggest, is that too much self-consciousness about the performance of an activity undermines its chances of success. To exercise one’s skills in the solution of a practical problem, one must focus on the problem itself, and not reflect on those skills. The musician, for example, must think about the notes to be played, and not about his virtues as a musician. Similarly, the courageous person thinks about how to win this particular battle, and is too engaged in this activity to step back and enjoy the observation of a courageous man in action. [...] When we enjoy seeing our friends use their moral skills, we are seeing something of ourselves, since we have much to do with their accomplishments. This oblique perspective on our “own” actions gives us a better view of moral activity than we can achieve through direct self-observation.¹⁶

M. “Aristotle on Friendship”. In: RORTY, Amélie Oksenberg. *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, p. 320.

¹⁴ MM 1213a16-17.

¹⁵ COOPER, John M. Op. cit., p. 321. Cooper develops his explanation a little further, as we can notice in the following excerpts: ‘These threats to one’s objectivity must be reckoned with by everyone, the person who in fact possesses all the good qualities of character and intellect and no bad ones no less than other people. To be sure, the qualities in himself he thinks virtuous are so, and he has no faults; but how is he to be sure that he is to *know* what he is like? It is plausible to suggest, as our text does, that mistakes of this kind are not so apt to occur where one is observing another person and his life; here the facts, both about what are faults and what are virtues, are more likely, at least, to speak for themselves’. Id. Ibid., loc. cit. Italics from the author. “For it does seem fair to believe that objectivity about our friends is *more* securely attained than objectivity directly about ourselves. And the reliance we are being invited to place on our intuitive feeling of kinship with others is not, after all, either unchecked or unlimited. Id. Ibid., p. 323.

¹⁶ KRAUT, Richard. *Aristotle on the Human Good*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 143-4.

The interpretation proposed by Kraut is certainly compatible with Aristotle's text if we take as basis the excerpt of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in which it is affirmed that 'we can contemplate our neighbors better than ourselves and their actions better than our own'.¹⁷ However, we must take into account that the virtuous man is the one that not only desires to contemplate virtuous actions, he is the man that also desires *to be* virtuous. Kraut's interpretation can satisfy the first of these characteristics of the virtuous man, but not the second. On the extent Kraut disregards the formative role that friendship can come to exert on the virtuous man, his interpretation loses in strength because it does not satisfy in a complete manner the needs of a virtuous man, as well as the benefits that he can obtain by living with friends that are virtuous.¹⁸

The interpretation proposed by Kraut was based, on great extent, on the fact that he aimed to elaborate a hypothesis of explanation which did not depend on the utilization of the *Magna Moralia*, since the authenticity of this work is object of discussion, as indicates Kraut himself.¹⁹ However, and here we can make use of Cooper's analysis, even if the *Magna Moralia* is not one of Aristotle's works, this does not mean that the argument there presented is not perfectly appropriate regarding what Aristotle intended to express.

The lack in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, comparing with the *Magna Moralia*, would be a lack regarding the reason to study the behavior of the friends as a means to improve someone's own virtue, as well as the reason why it is valuable to receive advice concerning this issue from friends. Nevertheless, we can find in the *Nicomachean Ethics* some excerpts suggesting that Aristotle actually considered that friendship also fulfils the role of teaching for the virtuous man how to be virtuous and how to correct the failures that this individual was not able to correct by himself. This element can be noticed in the following excerpt, located at the end of book IX, concluding the analysis of the issue friendship: 'the friendship of the good men is good, being augmented by their companionship; and they are thought to become better too by their activities and

¹⁷ NE 1169b33-35.

¹⁸ An alternative of reading that is similar to the one sustained by Kraut is presented by Michael Pakaluk, who understands that the reason for friendship as consisting only in the obtainment of self-knowledge. Pakaluk's interpretation, however, does not possess the same deepness as the one presented by Kraut, and, differently from the one proposed by Cooper, does not present friendship as important in order to correct the mistakes that an individual is not capable of perceiving in himself. See PAKALUK, Michael. *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 283-5.

¹⁹ See KRAUT, Richard. Op. cit., p. 144, n. 58.

by improving each other; for from each other they take the mould of the characteristics they approve'.²⁰ At this moment we notice that friendship is seen by Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, just as it was presented in the *Magna Moralia*, as something that helps the individuals to improve ethically. We may also suppose, since an 'influence' that comes from friendship is mentioned, that one of the manners through which an individual of this relation takes 'the mould of the characteristics' that he approves would be through the observation of the other individuals' virtuous acts, and the other could be the product of judgments proffered by his friends concerning the acts that he considered as virtuous but that could have vices that he ignored.²¹

Another source, that also supports the utilization of the argument contained in the *Magna Moralia* to justify the need of friends in order for an individual to know himself is presented by Nancy Sherman in the following excerpt:

Before a friend, Aristotle suggests, we can bare ourselves, and acknowledge the foibles and weaknesses we hide from others (Rh. II.6). Stories we have told ourselves about how we failed to help another because of inadequate means or resources may simply not hold up in the presence of an intimate companion. [...] Thus, through intimate friends, we come to a vision of ourselves that is more resolute and definite than our purely internalized view affords.²²

This argument offered by Sherman seems to have its basis on the following excerpt of the sixth chapter of book II of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: 'nor are we ashamed of the same things before intimate as before strangers, but before the former of what seem genuine faults, before the latter of what seem conventional ones'.²³ 'The conditions

²⁰ NE 1172a12-14.

²¹ The utilization of the excerpt of *Magna Moralia* is also criticized by Kraut because, according to him, the excerpt from the *Magna Moralia* would not have the same object that the presentation of the issue friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. 'The passage in IX.9 concerns the pleasure we get from observing our friends, and it says that we can observe them better than we can observe ourselves. By contrast, the *MM* passage concerns the difficulties of knowing oneself, and it takes the observation of friends to be a mere means to the acquisition of self-knowledge. There is not a word in *MM* 1213a10-26 about the pleasure to be had simply in observing one's friends. So it is implausible to take the passages to be making the same point.' KRAUT, Richard. Op. cit., p. 144, n. 58. Against this critique from Kraut it seems enough to pay attention to the fact that the excerpt from the *Magna Moralia* which we quoted above (1213a10-26) textually asserts that 'it is pleasant to know oneself' and that this can be obtained through friends.

²² SHERMAN, Nancy. Aristotle on Friendship and the Shared Life. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. v. 47, n. 4 (jun.), 1987, p. 611. The same argument is presented by Nancy Sherman in a book on virtue in Aristotle and Kant, where there is an explicit mention to the excerpt of the *Magna Moralia* utilized by Cooper. See SHERMAN, Nancy. *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on virtue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 211-2.

²³ ARISTOTLE. *Rhetoric*. Translated by W. Rhys Roberts. In: BARNES, Jonathan. *The Complete Works*

under which we shall feel shame are these: first, having people related to us like those before whom we said we feel shame. These are, as was stated, persons whom we admire, or who admire us, or by whom we wish to be admired'.²⁴ In these two excerpts we can notice that in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle actually considers that an individual that seeks to be admired by his similar, as happens in the relation between friends by virtue, in which one friend admires the qualities of the other, is concerned with the judgments of this friend and tries to be in accordance with the virtue. In this situation, one individual will be admired by his friend, and if it does not take place, he will try to correct his actions taking into account the judgments proffered by his friends. If this reading is correct, then we can make use of these excerpts of *Rhetoric* as an additional support to the utilization of the explanation presented in the *Magna Moralia* in order to analyze the relation of friendship by virtue.

As a final summary of the relation of friendship as a relation with 'another self' it is possible to highlight that the friend will be presented by Aristotle as essential in order for a man to be virtuous and to know himself properly. The friends, in a friendship by virtue, are important not only because they propitiate pleasant experiences to the virtuous man, offering to him the possibility of contemplating virtuous actions, but also because they are essential in order for the virtuous man to actually be virtuous. The last argument that we analyzed, regarding the friendship by virtue, tried to indicate that it is due to this 'other self', the friend, that the virtuous man will actually be capable of knowing himself as a virtuous man. Together with friends that are impartial, that care about the virtuous nature of the acts of the friend, a man that tries to be virtuous will be more secure concerning the fact that he actually reached this condition when a friend asserts so. If an individual asserts of himself that he is virtuous, and his friends correct him pointing out vices that he ignored, then he has the opportunity to correct such acts and to become virtuous. Since the 'self-deception' is always possible, the friendship by virtue is essential in order for someone to become virtuous, because only with the help of friends an individual will be able to correctly know himself as a virtuous man.

Now we will be dedicated to present, in an abbreviated manner, the way Hegel worked with the concept 'recognition' in the section 'domination and slavery' of the

of Aristotle. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995. v. 2. 1384b25-28.

²⁴ Id. Ibid. 1384b28-30.

Phenomenology of Spirit. After this presentation of Hegelian's notion of recognition, we will complete this text presenting the points of contact between the Hegelian conception of recognition and the Aristotelian notion of friendship by virtue.

We shall start, therefore, with the analysis of the way the parameters of the recognition are described:

The middle term is self-consciousness which splits into the extremes; and each extreme is this exchanging of its own determinateness and an absolute transition into the opposite. Although, as consciousness, it does indeed come *out of itself*, yet, through out of itself, it is at the same time kept back within itself, is *for itself*, and the self outside it, is for *it*. It is aware that it at once is, and is not, another, consciousness, and equally that this other is *for itself* only when it supersedes itself as being for itself, and is for itself only in the being-for-self of the other. Each is for the other the middle term, through which each mediates itself with itself and unites with itself; and each is for itself, and for the other, an immediate being on its own account, which at the same time is such only through this mediation. They *recognize* themselves as *mutually recognizing* one another.²⁵

According to this excerpt, there is recognition always when one consciousness, an individual, observes another individual, that is his similar, as his similar. Since one consciousness asserts that the other is his similar and recognizes this other consciousness as such, in order for an actual recognition to attain it is necessary that the other consciousness behave in the same manner, that this conscience recognizes the other as his similar.

There is another excerpt in the *Phenomenology*, now in the moment the notion 'recognition' is utilized to analyze the relation between a master and a slave, that also contributes to clarify how we should understand the utilization of the term 'recognition': 'But, for recognition proper the moment is lacking, that what the lord does to the other he also does to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself he should also do to the other. The outcome is a recognition that is one-sided and unequal'.²⁶ In this excerpt it is possible to notice Hegel's concern in pointing out that the recognition is not always the kind of recognition that takes place in the way it was presented in the text of the *Phenomenology* that we quoted above. While the

²⁵ HEGEL, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translation by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. Paragraph 184. Italics from the author. From now on we will refer this book with the abbreviation PS, followed by the number of the paragraph.

²⁶ PS 191.

consciousnesses do not observe each other as similar, the recognition that a consciousness can obtain is always a recognition that it obtains through observing itself, meaning, 'one-sided', and this recognition takes place through another being that is considered as different, therefore 'unequal'. Consequently, in this moment we are not facing an example of full recognition, of the 'recognition proper', but only of an incomplete kind of recognition.

In the reading of another excerpt of the *Phenomenology*, that will end up emerging as essential for the comprehension of the utilization of the term 'recognition', we will find the terms 'certainty' and 'truth' in order to qualify the knowledge that a conscience has of itself. The following is asserted: 'Each is indeed certain of its own self, but not of the other, and therefore its own self-certainty still has no truth. For it would have truth only if its own being-for-self had confronted it as an independent object'.²⁷ The truth, for Hegel, in opposition to the 'certainty', in the context is characterized as a certainty that the subject possesses and that is confirmed by the world, confirmed by an 'independent object'. A self-consciousness has the certainty, and not the truth, regarding the fact of being a self-consciousness, since it does not find anything in the world that confirms its certainty of being a self-consciousness. Following this line of thought is the remark presented by Vaz when he asserts that in the human world "the consciousness truly has its experience as a self-consciousness because the mediating object for its recognizing itself is not the indifferent object of the world, but it is itself in its being-other: it is another self-consciousness".²⁸ When in a relation of domination and slavery, none of the consciousnesses truly knows itself, since the relation of the consciousnesses is developed in such a manner that one of the consciousnesses always sees the other as a different being, as a non-similar being. The master sees the slave as different from him, since the slave, differently from the master, is not free. In the same way, the slave cannot see the master in any other manner other than as different, since the slave observes himself as an individual that does not possess freedom, while his master is someone that is free.

Both consciousnesses, when they meet themselves for the first time, bring with them the truth that they are beings capable of dominating objects. They obtained this

²⁷ PS 186.

²⁸ VAZ, Henrique C. de Lima. Senhor e Escravo: Uma parábola da filosofia ocidental. *Revista Síntese*, s. l., n. 21, 1980, p. 17.

truth by observing themselves acting in the world and changing the world, they confirmed their subjective certainty as a dominator through observing an object, the one that they desired, as being dominated, in such a way that it testifies this certainty. However, this certainty is related to the fact that the consciousnesses are capable of dominating the objects of the world, it is not related to the fact that they are capable of dominating everything that exists in the world. The consciousness lives in a situation in which its certainty as an individual that is capable of dominating everything is constantly put in question, since, if when it dominates a certain object it confirms again the certainty that it had about itself, as the consciousness consumes the dominated object, the truth that it has had about itself as the dominator is dissolved, and it comes back to its subjective certainty. The consciousness that tries to affirm itself as the dominator lives in a world that at each moment puts in question its certainty, the recognition that it obtains of being the dominator, through the dominated object, is constantly dissolved, because when it dominates the object the consciousness consumes it, and then it loses that confirmation that it had obtained as the dominator of the object.

With the introduction of the slave in the relation that the dominator consciousness has with the world this consciousness will finally reach the truth that it is the dominator. When the master interposes the slave between he and the world, and forces the slave to bring to him the objects of the world, he becomes independent of the world, and his certainty of being the dominator is no longer put in doubt with the consumption of the object, since the master has a slave that will provide new objects to be consumed.²⁹ Interposing the slave between the master and the things in the world, the master finally can free himself of the desires that he had and that constantly put in doubt his condition of dominator. Concerning this situation, Hegel wrote:

For the lord, [...] the *immediate* relation becomes through this mediation [the mediation done by the slave] the sheer negation of the thing, or the enjoyment of it. What desire failed to achieve, he succeeds in doing, viz. to have done with the thing altogether, and to

²⁹ This argument belongs in part to Pinkard, on the extent that he observes that the introduction of the slave in the relation that the master has with the world has the capacity of freeing the master of the necessity of seeking in the world the objects that confirm his certainty as a dominator. Our argument deviates from the one presented by Pinkard because he understands that the struggle between the consciousnesses would have been originated from the will that both had in interposing a slave in its relation with the world. Cf. PINKARD, Terry. *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 50-2.

achieve satisfaction in the enjoyment of it. Desire failed to do this because of the thing's independence; but the lord, who has interposed the bondsman between it and himself, takes to himself only the dependent aspect of the thing and has the pure enjoyment of it. The aspect of its independence he leaves to the bondsman, who works on it.³⁰

The master also obtains the truth of the certainty that he is the dominator because his domination over the slave does not take place in the same way that its domination over the other objects. When dominating the slave, the master does not destroy him, he lets the slave live, under the condition that the slave frees the master of the necessity of going to the world in order to confirm the certainty that he has of himself through the domination of the objects of the world. The domination of the slave is of a different kind from the one that takes place regarding the other objects of the world, the truth of the certainty that the master had as dominator is not dissolved right after he dominates the object (the slave); now, the dominated object keeps existing, nevertheless, only as a dominated object, and not for having survived the attempt of domination.

It is important to clarify something about the nature of the truth that the master obtains through the slave, taking into account the following remarks done by Hegel: 'In this recognition the unessential consciousness is, for the lord, the object which constitutes the *truth* of his certainty of himself. But it is clear that this object does not correspond to its Notion'.³¹ Hegel is here concerned in highlighting that the truth obtained by the master, through his relation with the slave, is not a full truth, a truth in accordance with the concept of the individuals involved. When the master finds out the truth that he is independent of everything, he does it through the slave, he obtains this certainty recognizing himself in an object, the slave, that is not being observed in accordance with his concept, the concept of a consciousness. It is because the consciousness that is the slave is observed as an object, and not as a consciousness, that the master obtains the truth that he is independent of the world. As this truth is obtained through an equivocal conception of the consciousness that is the slave, a conception that observes this consciousness as an object, and not as a consciousness, the truth is transitory, it does not rest on the concept of the object, but only in the present manifestation of the consciousness that is being a slave.

³⁰ PS 190, HW 3/151. Italics from the author.

Above we presented the argument of the section ‘domination and slavery’ against slavery. In order to make it clear: the domination and enslavement kind of relation is not a proper, right kind of relation, since from it results a situation in which the individuals do not know the truth regarding themselves, regarding what they are. If they knew what they truly are, if their knowledge was in harmony with their concept, they would have recognized the other individuals as their similar, they would not have enslaved them. When an individual enslaves another, he denies to the other freedom, and at the same time this individual denies to himself the possibility of truly knowing himself.

Although the section of the *Phenomenology* devoted to the master-slave dialectic is not concluded with a positive outcome, with the attainment of a proper recognition, with the two consciousnesses recognizing each other as similar, we are able to extract from Hegel’s text some parameters regarding what would involve this kind of recognition. We know, due to the definition of ‘recognition’ already presented, that when a full recognition between two consciousnesses takes place each one of them will see in the other a similar being. The proper recognition necessarily involves two consciousnesses that are similar and that actually observe each other as similar, and also assert, each one for the other, that they are similar. In this situation, the consciousnesses obtain a knowledge concerning themselves, since what one consciousness asserts about itself it can confirm through the other consciousness, its similar. One of the consciousnesses asserts that it has a certain characteristic, and, since it recognizes in another consciousness the same characteristic, and this first consciousness asserts that the other consciousness is its similar (and so does the other consciousness regarding the first one), this consciousness can confirm in the other consciousness that it has this characteristic.

Once presented the way Hegel understands the notion ‘recognition’, we are able to indicate on which extent this notion is related with Aristotle’s friendship by virtue. It is true that there are many differences between the subjects dealt by Hegel and Aristotle – Hegel, when he employs the term ‘recognition’, is discussing what is wrong regarding slavery, while Aristotle, when analyzing the friendship by virtue, aims to describe the characteristics of this kind of friendship and to indicate which are the reasons for a

³¹ PS 192. Italics from the author.

virtuous man to desire to have friends. However, even if the two authors are dealing with different subjects, we can find in the Hegelian approach, in the utilization of the concepts 'recognition', 'truth' and 'certainty', a certain model of reasoning that is present in the characterization of the friendship by virtue, and therefore it will be with the presentation of this similarity that we will complete this study.

One of the fundamental elements of a friendship by virtue, the fact that it propitiates to the virtuous man the opportunity of contemplating virtuous actions, does not find a similar aspect in the master-slave dialectic. Nevertheless, when we pay special attention to the fact that the friend is presented by Aristotle as consisting in 'another self' we can find a common element in the manner Aristotle and Hegel analyze the relations among individuals. It is true that Hegel is working with a recognition that does not involve, necessarily, the bond of friendship, even so, he preserves and applies one element that is presented in the characterization of friendship by virtue. The virtuous man needs friends because only through his friends, these other selves, he can appropriately know himself, he actually can know that he is virtuous. The friend propitiates for the virtuous man the possibility of confirming that image that he has of himself. In the same manner, and this is the main common element in order to establish a parallel between Aristotle and Hegel, a consciousness can only recognize itself as a consciousness when it recognized itself as a consciousness and is in this manner recognizes by another consciousness, considered as its similar. Therefore, in the way Hegel operates the notion of recognition we can find a movement of mirroring that is structurally identical to the one presented by Aristotle while analyzing the friendship by virtue.

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