

## A Synopsis of Hegel's "Lordship and Bondage"

The existence of another self is a condition of self-consciousness. But the first spontaneous reaction of a self confronted with another self is to assert its own existence in the face of the other. The one self desires to cancel out or annihilate the other self as a means to the triumphant assertion of its own selfhood.

But since one's self-consc. requires recognition on the part of another self-consc., the literal slaying of the other would defeat the purpose of one's self-consc. Hence the development of the master-slave relationship.

Paradoxically, however, by not recognizing the slave as real person, the master deprives himself of the recognition that he needs (the recognition, that is, that he, unlike the slave, is free ), since there is no free person to recognize him. The master thereby forfeits the condition essential to his self-consc. (and therefore his personhood.) The slave, however, works on material things and therein reifies himself, becoming an existing person.

- - - - -

The dialectic goes on from here to the Stoic Consciousness, thence to the Unhappy Consciousness, where the contradiction, e.g., in the consciousnesses of master and slave, are now known to exist in the *same* self. *This* contradiction or division is overcome only as the *individual* rises to *universal* self-consciousness.