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Hegel, Marx and their critique of the market

Nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design. (Ferguson)

How can Marx arrive at radically different implications than Hegel in his assessment of the market despite his adoption of many Hegelian theorems in his own conception?¹

In this article, I would first like to present the premises and conceptual elements of the Hegelian and Marxist theories which are at the root of their differences regarding assessment of the market. Secondly, I would like to clarify whether Hegel's theory of will can be adhered to as a basis for practical philosophy without necessarily having to buy into the idea of the market. Is the institution of the market perhaps inevitably an implication of the Hegelian conception of recognition?² An analogous question is posed in reference to Marx: Can we adhere to central aspects of Marx's analysis of the capitalistic world without ending up with its pragmatic, free-floating demand for general elimination of markets? Is it possible to make peace with the market, or at least some of its institutional variants, but, nevertheless, to adhere to central insights of the Marxist criticism of a political economy?

To accomplish these goals, the *first* part of this article briefly presents the foundations of Hegelian and Marxist theory of action, which, in my opinion, are almost identical. In doing so, I will pursue the hypothesis that one central reason for the Hegel's and Marx's opposing views regarding the

¹ This finding applies not only for the market; it is also valid for morals, law or the state as a whole. For this reason, the subject of this article possibly aims not only at specifics of the market, but also at a more fundamental context: How much alienation must or should we realistically, ethically or even reasonably settle for? This further reaching question is, however, not dealt with in this article.

² In his book *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Elements of the Philosophy of Right), Hegel no longer uses the concept of recognition as an organizing regional principle; instead, "free will" takes over this role ("der Wille, welcher frey ist"); cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Gesammelte Werke*. In conjunction with the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft published by the Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste. Hamburg 1968 ff. Volume 14.1 (in the following, I cite from this edition using GW and an indication of the volume and the corresponding paragraphs). For recognition-theoretical aspects in Hegel and Marx, cf. Schmidt am Busch, Hans-Christoph: *"Anerkennung' als Prinzip der kritischen Theorie"*. Berlin 2011.

market is found in their differing assessments of the non-intentional consequences of human action. It is even possible that this perspective reveals that, from a philosophical point of view, Hegel's and Marx's positions are not at all so radically divergent.

The *second* part of this article addresses the answers given by Hegel and Marx in regard to the problem of non-intentional consequences of the market. In doing so, I will use an artificially constructed comparison to differentiate between the metaphysical and normative dimensions of these two authors. This heuristic differentiation regarding Hegel and Marx should be understood only as a distinction in aspects and not be misunderstood as positivistic. It is transverse to the focus on "empirical or metaphysical". With Hegel and Marx, it is a matter of philosophical conceptions — "philosophical" as opposed to the perspective of **empirical** disciplines — both of which include a practical and a metaphysical dimension.³ Of course, both Hegel's and Marx's conceptions are individual sciences (and, in this sense, empirical). But the term "empirical" is dazzling and ambivalent; this is why I base the following arguments on the differentiation between metaphysical versus normative, which also demands an explanation.⁴

The *third* part of this article serves to demonstrate how complex my simple *prima facie* question actually is as well as how and how far one must venture into Hegel's and Marx's respective conceptions in order to be able to discover the difference one seeks.

At this point, my considerations will terminate and, in the *fourth* part of this article, lead to reflections on the point at which and how further questions have to be asked in order to better understand this constellation between Hegel's and Marx's conceptions.⁵

1. Action-theoretical foundations in Hegel and Marx

³ Cf. Rózsa, Erzsébet: *Hegels Konzeption praktischer Individualität*, Paderborn 2007, Chap. 4, 6 and 7 and Rózsa, Erzsébet: "Hegels Wirtschaftsphilosophie in seiner *Rechtsphilosophie* von 1820" (in publication).

⁴ The most thorough representation of the speculative-logical structure of Hegelian philosophy of right is found in Vieweg, Klaus: *Das Denken der Freiheit*. Munich 2012; in order to account for the performance strength of Hegelian economic philosophy, however, its explanatory value must be shown; a simple reference to the conceptual derivational connections in Hegel's system is certainly insufficient.

⁵ This is definitely to be understood as critical self-understanding: Where can one plausibly position oneself systematically in these questions when one comes from this philosophical tradition? How much market (and in which institutional form) can be accepted? And, more generally: What degree of alienation of what kind can be borne to what degree? And how can this value judgment be justified philosophically? In regard to the project, this article is only preparatory work since it is limited to the question of the market and is primarily exegetical.

Gelöscht: individual

1.1 The concept of action in Hegel

Hegel introduces his concept of action in the chapter on morality of the philosophy of right.⁶ In § 110 of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* it is stated that:

a) “The content as “mine” has for me this character: by virtue of its identity in subject and object it enshrines for me my subjectivity, not merely as my inner purpose, but also inasmuch as it has acquired outward existence.” (“Der Inhalt ist für mich als der Meinige so bestimmt, dass er in seiner Identität nicht nur als mein innerer Zweck, sondern auch, insofern er die äußerliche Objectivität erhalten hat, meine Subjectivität für mich enthalte.“⁷)

>From the action-theoretical perspective, this means: when I act, there must be a consequence of the action which can be described in a way so that I am able to recognize my goal as realized in the action. If this is not the case, it cannot be an action. Human actions always show aspects and result in consequences which are not recognized or anticipated by the actor. Thereby, it is possible that the actor has not known of or desired the consequences, but has only accepted them. Such non-intentional aspects or effects are always and unavoidably produced by humans through their actions. Nevertheless, according to Hegel, it is a proven and central component of our practice of attribution of moral responsibility that the actor must assume moral responsibility for at least some of these aspects and consequences. In both the occurrence of non-intentional aspects and consequences as well as the accountability for some of these aspects and consequences, according to Hegel’s philosophical explication and justification of this practice, the finiteness of human actors is manifested as a form of actual free will. After using the whole repertoire of his *Science of Logic* in the subsequent paragraph § 111 to show what a speculatively still to be explained deep structure this finiteness of human action presents, Hegel returns to the level of the theory of action, stating (in § 112):

⁶ In this article, I refer exclusively to the concept of action as it is unfolded by Hegel in *Elements (Grundlinien)*; for more comprehensive details, cf. Quante, Michael: *Hegels Begriff der Handlung*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt 1993 (in the following cited as *Handlung*) and Quante, Michael: *Die Wirklichkeit des Geistes*. Frankfurt am Main 2011, Chap.9 and 10 (in the following cited as *Wirklichkeit*).

⁷ GW 14.1, § 110; emphases in the original have not been adopted.

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c) “In carrying out my aims, I retain my subjectivity (§ 110) [i.e. recognize my intent in the result; MQ], during this process of objectifying them I simultaneously supersede the immediacy of this subjectivity as well as its character as this my individual subjectivity.”
 (“Indem ich meine Subjectivität in Ausführung meiner Zwecke erhalte (§ 110), hebe ich darin als der Objectivierung derselben diese Subjectivität zugleich als unmittelbare, somit als diese meine einzelne auf.“⁸)

The moment I recognize circumstances as the consequences of my inner purpose, my intent, I am no longer in inner subjectivity, but have created a social fact.⁹ This is why commonality shows up or, as Hegel also says, the objective, the social aspect of the action, even in this structure of intentional realization of a goal as such. Under objectification, Hegel combines two aspects that take place in realization of a goal: on the level of the action event, these are the non-intentional aspects and causal consequences which unfold an objectivity that transcends the inner subjectivity of the intention of the action. On the level of the description of the action (or attribution of the action), it is intersubjective recognition or also critique of the claim of validity that accompanies such realization of a goal that Hegel understands as objectification.¹⁰ Human action is thus not limited to a causal process, but necessarily represents — in Hegel’s conceptions — a conceptual phenomenon of recognition. As an actor, I claim to recognize what has resulted from me intentionally in a complex world situation and also to acknowledge this as my action in this

⁸ GW 14.1, § 112.

⁹ Hegel accepts the separation between inner and outer, private and public for the mental sphere (and thus also for the theory of action), not in the sense of two extensionally separate spheres, although he recognizes the discourse of inner and outer within the framework of the explication of his theory of action as a form of objectification of the subjectivity of the will; cf. Quante, *Wirklichkeit*, Chap. 4.

¹⁰ In this second dimension of objectification in which, according to Hegel, the commonality of reason is manifested, the grounds are found for action conceptually presupposing intersubjectivity; for more thorough treatment of this, cf. Quante, *Handlung* and Quante, *Wirklichkeit*, Chap. 9. Hegel goes to great lengths, especially in the marginal notes of the chapter on morality in *Elements (Grundlinien)*, to differentiate between these two forms of objectification. But he makes it considerably difficult for the reader to understand that he uses the term “act” similarly for both forms: “act” is used in opposition to “action”, both for the aspect of the event of the action and for a descriptive and evaluative social standard. Due to Hegel’s aims, this conflation is understandable since “act” unites these two forms of objectification. From the perspective of action-theoretical reconstruction, on the other hand, the use of the term “act” threatens to discredit the reflective contextual determination which should be differentiated between (action vs. act) as a mere equivocation.

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Gelöscht: Although

Gelöscht: .

Gelöscht: more

Gelöscht: aspects

Gelöscht: In view of

Gelöscht: evidence-objectives

Gelöscht: narrowness

Gelöscht: bo

Gelöscht: moments

particular world situation.¹¹ If an actor does not want to have certain consequences of his actions attributed to him and repudiates his intent or view of the occurrences, he then rejects the non-intentional aspects and consequences as attributable because they have not been what he had wanted or foreseen. Such rejection of moral attribution and also trying to talk one's way out by making excuses raise a claim for validity that does not simply end in the reconstruction of causal circumstances, but aims at recognition of norms and values. By such a demand from the actor for acknowledgement of his perspective on the occurrence as the standard for its evaluation, according to Hegel, it becomes explicit that a reference to the will of others is implicitly included in actions. An action is thus not a mere process of nature (not solely bodily behavior), but conceptually implies a social dimension of validity and, according to Hegel, presupposes more than an actor conceptually.¹²

It is clear that this entanglement of subjective and objective perspectives in actions has to lead to even more complex constellations in the context of social cooperation: in such cases, the participating actors have to come to an agreement and react reciprocally with one another; they all have to deal with their own expectations and insights regarding the actions as well as with those of the other actors. In doing so, there is the possibility – this was one of the fundamental convictions of Scottish economists which Hegel embedded constructively in his philosophy of right very early on – that non-intentional consequences result from intentional actions and that these exhibit a structure of expedience within the framework of interaction although no individual actor had this intent. Hegel and, as will be shown, also Marx both accept these findings. However, they conceptualize them differently and evaluate them contrarily.

1.2. The concept of action in Marx

Marx, who was very familiar with Hegel's philosophy of right in general and with Hegel's concept of action in particular, summarizes his own conceptions of action in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* within the framework of his analysis of alienation as follows:

¹¹ Hegel unfolds these interrelations in his philosophical explication of our practice of presenting arguments and accepting (or rejecting) apologies; cf. Quante, *Wirklichkeit*, Chap. 10.

¹² This intersubjective conception of action should not be confused with social interaction or cooperation, which involves several actors on a different level and in a different way.

“The object produced by labor, its product, now stands opposed to it as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object and turned into a physical thing; this product is an objectification of labor.”

“Der Gegenstand, den die Arbeit produziert, ist ihr Produkt, tritt ihr als ein fremdes Wesen, als eine vom Produzenten unabhängige Macht gegenüber. Das Produkt der Arbeit ist die Arbeit, die sich in einem Gegenstand fixiert, sachlich gemacht hat. Es ist die Vergegenständlichung der Arbeit, die Verwirklichung der Arbeit und ihre Vergegenständlichung.”¹³

Objectification means *energeia*, not just materialization, and here Marx remains in the tradition of Aristotle and Hegel. The idea expressed in the objectification model of action is, at the same time, an integral component of common sense: First of all, there is something — in an intuitively plausible sense — an inner (or subjective) something; then comes realization (in a process sense) through bodily behavior which is steered by the intention of the actor, and, in the end, as a consequence of this body movement, there is a situation that, when the action is successful, can justifiably be described as realization (in a result sense) of the intention. ~~But common sense also knows and acknowledges~~ that a lot can go wrong in this realization.

Gelöscht: Another integral component of

Gelöscht:

Gelöscht: is the experience

It is systematically important at this point that, as in the line of argumentation leading to Fichte’s conception of the “I”, Marx holds the thesis that nothing in the result of the action can be objectified that has not already been contained in the realization of the action. In his analysis of alienation, Marx argues as follows: in the first step, he differentiates between the worker’s alienation to the product of his/her activity and the worker’s alienation to his/her activity during its execution; in the second step, he asks how these two dimensions of alienation relate to one another and proposes the thesis that alienation in the execution of action is the initial one since nothing can be in the result that has not already existed in the act. Marx presents this central premise in his conception of alienation and fundamental premise for action and subjectivity theory in a rhetorical question:

¹³ MEGA 2, I.2, p. 236.

How would the product the worker's activity be able to present itself to the worker as alien if the worker did not alienate himself from himself in the act of production? The product is only the resumé of the action, i.e. of the production.

Wie würde d[em] Arbeiter d[as] Produkt seiner Tätigkeit fremd gegenüber treten können, wenn er im Akt der Production selbst sich nicht selbst entfremdete? Das Product ist ja nur das Resumé der Tätigkeit, d[er] Production.¹⁴

Now a problem arises, however: If this statement is correct, where do the non-intentional consequences of human actions come from? Hegel also has this problem, of course, since he shares Fichte's premise of the primacy of activity over the result of the activity and, in this sense, of the primacy of the practical (in a pragmatic-action-theoretical, i.e. fundamental subjectivity-theoretical meaning).

2. The problem of the non-intentional consequences of intentional action and the market

We have now arrived at the starting point of the central question in this article: How can the consequences of their actions which are unforeseen by the individual agents be explicated philosophically controlled as the realization of a goal if circumstances should not only be comprehended as causal consequences of actions, but also as a purposeful occurrence?¹⁵ Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson have presented such an interpretation regarding institutionally constituted action in general and the market in particular. Their metaphor of an invisible hand constitutes a central point of reference for any critique of the market.

Marx and Hegel share the assumption that individual actions and interactions bring about consequences in the world which can be interpreted as goal-realizations and not only as causal occurrences by understanding observers, but, at the same time, cannot be attributed to an individual actor. Since both Marx and Hegel follow the tradition of Fichte's conceptions, they thus also share

¹⁴ MEGA 2, I.2, p. 238.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the problem, the aspects of the action not taken note of would also have to be discussed since these are also essential in our practice of attributing moral responsibility, as are the putting forward and acceptance of apologies. With a view to the research program of critique of political economy, they are presumably also an important component of Marxist ideology.

the problem of how to explain and evaluate this finding in their philosophical conceptions of action and in their critique of the market.

Humans understand themselves fundamentally through actions; we are thus always tempted to assume an actor on the supra-individual level and find intentional or goal-oriented realization to be a reasonable interpretation — this is even encouraged through the grammar of our descriptive language. Variations of this are seen in the “idea” (of totality of the whole) which Marx criticizes in Hegel’s metaphysics, but also in “capital”, Marx’s own literary figure as an “automatic subject processing within itself”.¹⁶ The decisive question is how to explicate this finding philosophically: Are such descriptions only a short form reducing a complex theory to individual actors and their individual actions or does interpreting supra-individual social institutions as mega-subjects implementing a purpose make sense and is perhaps even unavoidable?

According to Marx’s interpretation of Hegel, speaking of the “idea” implies a supra-individual actor (this is the reason why Marx agrees with Feuerbach’s thesis that Hegel’s philosophy is a form of theology).¹⁷ A lot of interpreters have similarly understood Marx’s recourse to a level of purpose of non-intentional consequences in cooperation unavoidably as the assumption of a mega-subject pursuing its own purposes behind the participants’ backs. The notion thereby that the “idea”, capital or any other mega-subject pursues its own purposes and, in doing so, uses human actors the way a puppeteer manipulates his marionettes, the systematically most implausible variation of all the conceivable forms of holism in social philosophy. This version may be a prominent one, but it is also a defamatory interpretation — of Hegel as well as of Marx.¹⁸

If, on the other hand, as supported by every philosophical reason, neither such an interpretation of Hegel’s or Marx’s conceptions is considered reasonable, nor such holism a plausible conception, a problem then arises: Must, under these conditions, a purposeful, intentional description of the supra-individual level of social action be renounced? Any interpretation drawn in consequence, whether defined in detail in a system-theoretical or general-functionalistic manner of speaking, however, only veils the problem: either it intentionally hides any references to the intentional —

¹⁶ MEGA 2, II.5, p. 109; Marx retains this formulation in all the editions of *Capital*; it is also in the canonical fourth edition of the first volume.

¹⁷ Cf. Quante, Michael: After Hegel. The Realization of Philosophy through Action”, in: *Routledge Companion to 19th Century Philosophy*. ed. by Dean Moyar. London, 2010, pp. 197-237.

¹⁸ Cf. Quante, *Wirklichkeit*, Chap. 12.

as, for example, our commonplace talk of evolution — or it explicitly limits itself to the discussion of causal consequences and consistently avoids any mention of intention. Reduced in this way, however, the institutional nature of social affairs, i.e. the constitutive design, is no longer considered. All that remains are only individual actors with their mental state, their body movements and causal interactions, as well as the situations resulting from them. The rest would be mere mechanics (or stochastics) and the concept of a social world would thus be eliminated as a genuine prestige phenomenon. In my opinion, aversion to pursuing this phenomenally implausible and philosophically not very promising direction presents a real systematic challenge. The institution of the market constitutes a variation of this problem when addressed as by Hegel and Marx. Both of these philosophers understand market developments as the result of actors who see themselves as autonomous private owners in the first step and then interact with one another in the next step; market developments as institutionally constituted interaction are not happenings planned in advance. Nevertheless, something that can be interpreted as purposeful results from this; it can be left open here whether this can be defined as intrinsically valuable, as normatively substantial or even as only something increasing welfare.¹⁹ For the participating actors, however, something eminently negative can also emerge on the individual level. For his reason, Hegel is not a neoliberal devotee of the market; he, too, realized that adversity and hardship are produced systematically through this social arrangement and that individuals can suffer massively under the consequences of market developments. Hegel is neither naive nor driven ideologically to the view that the market generates the best possible result or even just the best possible for all the participants when allowed to run free. But Hegel does not simply evaluate the market only negatively and as a social phenomenon that should be eliminated.²⁰ As a philosopher, he is confronted with the double challenge of conceptualizing the individual interpretations of action and the purposeful, supra-individual happenings in terms of action-theory and evaluating them normatively.

Particularity, in its primary determination as that which is opposed to the universal of the will in general (see §6), is subjective need, which attains its objectivity, i.e. its satisfaction, by means of (α) external things [Dinge], which are likewise the property and product of the

¹⁹ For normative restraints which the market implements in Hegel's conceptions of the objective spirit, see Schmidt am Busch, Hans-Christoph: *Religiöse Hingabe oder soziale Freiheit*. Hamburg 2007.

²⁰ Cf. Ellmers, Sven: *Freiheit und Wirtschaft. Theorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft nach Hegel*. Bielefeld 2015.

needs and wills of others and of (β) activity and work, as the mediation between the two aspects. The end of subjective need is the satisfaction of subjective particularity, but in the relation [Beziehung] between this and the needs and free arbitrary will of others, universality asserts itself, and the resultant manifestation [Scheinen] of rationality in the sphere of finitude is the understanding. This is the chief aspect to be considered here and the one which constitutes the conciliatory element within this sphere.

Political economy is the science which begins with the above viewpoints, but must go on to explain mass relations and mass movements in their qualitative and quantitative determinacy and complexity. — This is one of the sciences which have originated in the modern age as their element [Boden]. The development of science is of interest in showing how thought extracts, from the endless multitude of details with which it is initially confronted, the simple principles of the thing [Sache], the understanding which works within it and controls it (see Smith, Say, and Ricardo).” — To recognize, in the sphere of needs, this manifestation [Scheinen] of rationality which is present in the thing [Sache] and active within it has, on the one hand, a conciliatory effect; but, conversely, this is also the field in which the understanding, with its subjective ends and moral opinions, gives vent to its discontent and moral irritation.²¹

Hegel deals with this problem on two levels in § 189 of *Elements (Grundlinien)*. As always, the conceptual development does not take place in the annotation to the paragraph; instead, references are drawn to the factual issues which form the corresponding context for Hegel’s development of his intended structure. In this annotation, Hegel questions the relation between what the national economy has discovered on the level of the rational, individual disciplinary description of market developments and its theory formation, on the one hand, and the explicit interpretation within the framework of his social philosophy by means of his logical categories, on the other.²² Hegel’s

²¹ GW 14.1, § 189.

²² The general question behind this is how Hegel’s interpretations of phenomena within the framework of his speculative philosophy comply with the individual scientific descriptions of these phenomena. Hegel himself also deals with this question. In his famous chapter on the *Phenomenology of Mind*, which is dedicated to observant reason. Hegel does not ridicule cranium research, but poses the serious question of what meaningful information this discipline can

compact answer with reference to the relation between national economy and philosophy of the market is found in § 189:

“Political economy is the science which begins with the above viewpoints but must go on to explain mass relations and mass movements in their qualitative and quantitative determinacy and complexity.”

According to Hegel, it is consistent and completely right that the economy does so. It is by no means philosophy, but has different goals, different insight objectives and different methods. Insofar, there is no problem. After a dash, Hegel continues:

“This is one of the sciences which have originated in the modern age as their element [Boden]. The development of science is of interest in showing how thought extracts from the endless multitude of details with which it is initially confronted the simple principles of the thing [Sache], the understanding which works within it and controls it (see Smith, Say, and Ricardo).”

Generalization from inductive bases and the presence of a certain sort of legalities are named. There is a certain explanatory pattern, a certain set of categories which Hegel assigns to reason. Then Hegel switches levels and subject:

“To recognize, in the sphere of needs, this manifestation [Scheinen] of rationality which is present in the thing [Sache] and active within it has, on the one hand, a conciliatory effect;“

Rationality is neither the object nor method of economy; it is the genuine business of philosophy. Hegel, as a philosopher interpreting the national economy, the market and the theories of the market finds profound satisfaction in detecting the manifestation of rationality in this hustle and bustle. This philosophical interpretation of the happening is not a separate discipline. Behind what

detect about the mind with its means and tries to determine the limits of such observation. Hegel wants to clarify how such observation complies with a philosophical compilation of the mind. These are all questions which we also have to answer when we work interdisciplinarily and communicate as philosophers with neuroscientists. Hegel develops a differentiated answer to this problem complex; cf. my analysis in Quante, *Wirklichkeit*, Chap. 4-6.

constitutes reason, the philosopher sees something else which is characterized by Hegel as the manifestation of rationality.

At the same time, Hegel recognizes that this subject area is also rightfully dealt with by reason.²³ Thus an expanded change in perspective takes place; now, not necessarily or primarily the economist is meant, but also the individual participating in these doings with his perspective as an actor:

“(C)onversely this is also the field in which the understanding, with its subjective ends and moral opinions, gives vent to its discontent and moral irritation.”

This single sentence condenses the point of view of the individual disciplines, of the participating subjects and of the speculative philosophers. The interface with which Hegel puts these perspectives into a philosophically specified relation is his statement: *The understanding is the manifestation of rationality*. This interpretation is also supported by the main text in the paragraph. Its opening invoking logical provisions is a typical sentence for Hegel’s *Elements (Grundlinien)*:

“Particularity, in its primary determination as that which is opposed to the universal of the will in general (see §6), is subjective need, which attains its objectivity, i.e. its satisfaction, by means of (α) external things [Dinge], which are likewise the property and product of the needs and wills of others and of (β) activity and work, as the mediation between the two aspects.”

At this point, we have Hegel’s theory of action at our disposal and know that subjective needs are the particular in the general and that the general is the rationality of the will; it has already been mentioned that interactions and material products, etc. are needed for the realization of intended actions. This sentence presents the logical characterization of cooperative action as the fulfillment of particular individual purposes by individual actors who, at the same time, participate in a general rationality as qua rational beings. The next statement is then relevant for our present question:

²³ The thesis that the individual scientific and the philosophical treatment of economic phenomena cannot be differentiated through an extensional distribution by discipline is connected with this. For this reason, Hegel’s approach also consistently aims at a methodologically and categorically constituted difference between the understanding and rationality.

“The end of subjective need is the satisfaction of subjective particularity, but in the relation [Beziehung] between this and the needs and free arbitrary will of others, universality asserts itself, and the resultant manifestation [Scheinen] of rationality in the sphere of finitude is the understanding. This is the chief aspect which must be considered here, and which itself constitutes the conciliatory element within this sphere.”

Hegel’s formulations in this section are exceedingly precise: by using the “indem” relation, Hegel makes an important action-theoretical point.²⁴ Hegel’s descriptions have to do with one and the same subject area, namely that of individual actions as the realization of collective action structures and as individual realizations of intent which are correlated with one another by “indem” (by). For the theory of action and also for social philosophy, these non-causal relations are an important instrument for relating descriptive perspectives with one another in not only an event-causal manner. The “indem” (by) relation is primarily non-causal, in contrast to the “dadurch, dass” (as a result) relation.

In §189, Hegel uses “Scheinen” twice. With this, he points to one of the most unfathomable sections in his entire oeuvre, namely “Wesenslogik”, the essence of logic, because “Scheinen” is ambiguous in Hegel’s logic: in addition to its positive sense, which Ernst Bloch, for example, points out with “Vorschein” in the sense of preliminary stage, there is also “bloßer Schein” with “Scheinen” in the sense of deception, delusion. We have thus identified the ontological ambivalence which Hegel systematically takes advantage of for the double perspectivity of his explication: on the one hand, there is the interpreting philosopher who knows that the meaningfulness of the mind is not decided on the level of individual actors and their intents, but rather adjusts itself behind their backs through the rationally coordinated cooperation in institutional arrangements; the philosopher knows that actual rationality is found on this subjacent level; the philosopher recognizes in this the revelation of the higher sphere of reality as well as reason as the capacity even greater than the understanding. The participants, on the other hand, are taken in by the apparent impression of this rationality, i.e. by their ideological contortions and absurdities.

²⁴ Cf. Quante, *Wirklichkeit*, pp. 247-252.

Gelöscht: *Excursus: Lost in Translation*¶

The first comprehension difficulty comes from the text *prima facie* appearing to be ungrammatical. In order to achieve clarity, pointing out some characteristics of the English translation of the Hegelian text is instructive.¶

¶ First of all, it is striking that “Scheinen” is inadequately translated as “manifestation” because this would correspond to “Erscheinen” and not “Scheinen” in Hegelian terminology. A second mistake is in the following: the German introductory statement with “indem etwas so ist, so ist etwas” emphasizes a differentiation in aspect. This is eliminated in the English translation because Hegel’s sentence is broken up in two sentences. In the first of the two, the translator solves a problem in the original text in which it is unclear to whom or what “sein Zweck” (his/its intent) refers. In English, this difficulty is eliminated in the changed sentence, but the aspect structure is also lost through it. In my opinion, this is the second mistake or, at least, a problematic interpretive intervention which ought to be identified. A third point, and one for which the translation is meaningful, is the solution found for an incomprehensible section in Hegel’s Text: ¶

¶ “so ist dieß Scheinen der Vernünftigkeit in diese Sphäre der Endlichkeit der Verstand die Seite, auf die es in der Betrachtung ankommt.” ¶

¶ (English translation: the resultant manifestation [Scheinen] of rationality in the sphere of finitude is the understanding...)

¶ The insertion of “Scheinen der Vernünftigkeit in diese Sphäre der Endlichkeit” has to be read and understood as Hegel’s clarification of “der Verstand”; according to Hegel, the important point on this level is consideration of the understanding. This is expressed very well in the English translation by moving “die Seite” into the second sentence. The reason for the translator into English to do this was probably to solve this comprehension difficulty. The price for the solution, however, is the dissolution of the “indem” structure. In the theory of action, the difference between “I order a beer by raising my hand” and “I frighten the waiter when I raise my hand” is, however, systematically exceedingly important. The relations to one another into which descriptions of the action are placed are never action-theoretically blameless. They generate intentional contexts which are simultaneously causal contexts; in general, this is an important finding for the theory of action.¶

Gelöscht: not inexact, but rather

Gelöscht: This is, however, sacrificed in the translation; an interpreter working only with the English edition cannot see at all that

Gelöscht: Our conclusion so far can be summarized by stating that, i

Formatiert: Deutsch (Deutschland)

Formatiert: Deutsch (Deutschland)

Gelöscht:

According to my thesis, Marx's critique of ideological forms as well as his differentiation between essence and appearance in his critique of the political economy cannot be understood without acceptance of this Hegelian double structure. At the same time, this double structure is indispensable for Marx's criticism of Hegel, to whom he attributes the conviction that there is a rationality at work for the good of all behind the backs of the participating actors, who know nothing about this and are sacrificed to it in individual cases due to market developments (or even large-scale weather conditions in the history of the world). This critique of Hegel by Marx also has its action-theoretical place here.

3. The underlying structure of the difference between Hegel and Marx

How does Hegel organize this differentiation in level and perspective in his explication of the market? He develops his conceptions with the help of the metaphysical categories of essence, manifestation and appearance as well as the differentiation between the understanding and rationality as two methodological strategies. Additionally, there is Hegel's teleological assumption that the lower forms are preliminary manifestations or differentiations of the complex whole which have no ontologically robust status in the philosophical point of view, but are only attributed an aspect and sub-function. With this metaphysical concept, Hegel does not make the idea itself an actor parallel to the actors; instead, he conceives that, as I like to put it, as grammar which holds together the rationality of the whole behind the individual perspectives, but which is only recognizable in philosophical and not in individual disciplinary interpretation.

Moreover, Hegel has a normative answer in two parts at hand: the dignity of the spirit does not unfold in the dignity of the single individual *first of all*, but is also constituted to the commonality of rationality through his/her contribution to sociality. Hegel is of the opinion that the real bearer of autonomy is the rationally constituted arrangement of social institutions and not the single individual, let alone his individual actions. According to his conception of will, the reason for this is that our personal dignity depends upon good citizens in a rationally organized "polis" (state) which allows us, as the top priority, to realize personal autonomy. The social element is not merely an instrument of individual self-realization; our individual self-realization is an essential part of the realization of the good; and this good is, in the end, located on the level of our species (or of the

overall public).²⁵ Hegel's *second* normative feature is found in the reference that the arrangements for realization of the recognition structures not accessible from the perspective of an individual agent are detected in the institutional structure.

In reference to the market, Hegel asserts that this kind of interaction reflects something essential for people. On the one hand, it manifests that we as individuals have a need for and are dependent upon interaction. On the other hand, Hegel discusses an evaluative dimension which belongs irreducibly to complete realization of free will in this dependence. The question, however, remains whether this evaluative dimension can be realized solely through and in market arrangements. Could a kind of personal respect characteristic for market developments perhaps also be realized in different arrangements? In this case, the market would not be a necessary component of Hegelian conceptions of will and recognition, but instead only sufficient realization of some of their moments. If Hegel could, however, show that such realization of personal respect only works out through the market, such a system would always belong to a conception of full autonomy for finite beings, even if different values of this sub-system would possibly have to be established institutionally. That is an interesting Hegelian question in regard to interpretation.

Marx's answer to this specific issue is somewhat different although he uses basically the same conceptual framework as Hegel. For Marx, it is not the idea, but capital as an "automatic subject" which rules the structure of the social sphere. Functionally, the entire structure exhibits far-reaching equivalences: when reading Marx, it is easy to fall into interpreting capital itself as a genuine actor. Marx also has a purpose on the systemic level of interaction which can be described as a deficit mode of action; this is why he also speaks of an automatic subject.

Talk of the automatic subject can be interpreted as Marx's reply to Hegel's rationality-understanding narrative, for the automatic state, i.e. the machine, is the understanding-metaphysics

²⁵ This normative conviction is, for example, the foundation for Hegel's critique of contractualist conceptions in political philosophy. For systematic issues resulting from this, cf. Siep, Ludwig: *Praktische Philosophie im Deutschen Idealismus*. Frankfurt am Main 1992, Chap. 15. For background information on the development of the history of ideas regarding the overall Hegelian conception, cf. Siep, Ludwig: *Der Staat als irdischer Gott. Genese und Relevanz einer Hegelschen Idee*. Tübingen 2015.

of the social sphere.²⁶ According to Marx, capitalism is an atrophied stage of the realization of the genus of mankind and the mechanistic state of enlightenment is the impoverishment of the social sphere.²⁷ “Automatic” here means in opposition to organically living, not in the biological sense, but in the sense of a rational unit, a concrete totality. In my suggestion for a way of interpretation, Marx uses this semantic context to summon this image of automation. He shares the theoretical framework with Hegel, but does not consider the overall structure to be a rational unit or the suitable solution for the objective mind. He understands it merely as the most extreme inner conflict and alienation in the human genus. This is the decisive reassessment, for the contrast on the metaphysical level is summoned up again on the normative level. For Hegel, this is the illusion (“Scheinen”) of rationality; for Marx, it is perverted rationality as an automation of understanding. On the normative level, Marx criticizes freedom, equality, ownership and Bentham as wrong standards.²⁸ This criticism itself is not free of norms, but Marx considers these to be alienated norms in opposition to his conception of a non-alienated genus. His critique of the market, which he holds to be the adequate implementation of constituted normativity under private law and thus also of deontological ethics of justice, is supported by anthropologically profound ethics whose main features he sets out in detail in the Mill excerpts of 1844. Marx specifically criticizes not only the market, but also, on a more fundamental level, the self-instrumentalization of bartering arrangements and of production for bartering. It could be assumed that, for Marx, market critique is a necessary consequence of his anthropologically founded critique of instrumentalization and self-instrumentalization.

This results in two follow-up questions regarding Marx. First on all, can kinds of markets be conceived which do not exhibit the defects diagnosed by Marx on the more fundamental level? Would it be possible for a market constituted in this way to represent a reasonable solution for certain problems in cooperation? If it could be shown that the alienation problems identified do not have to exist in every kind of market mechanism, such a form of the market would be compatible

²⁶ Here we only have to recall the well-known passage from the so-called *Oldest System Program of German Idealism*, where the state is put on a level of a machine (cf. GW 2, p. 615). Although the authors of this text are not ascertained, the text shows that the metaphor regarding the state was also a critical turning-point for Hegel.

²⁷ The market as only a reduced realization of the social sphere is also expressed in Hegel’s talk of the understanding (“Not- and Verstandesstaat”), cf. GW 14.1, § 160; for a current discussion of this connection, cf. Vieweg, Klaus: “Jenseits von Wall Street und People’s Republic“. In: *Zur Architektonik praktischer Vernunft — Hegel in Transformation*. Ed. by Hartmut Rosa and Klaus Vieweg. Berlin 2014, pp. 11-27.

²⁸ MEGA 2, II.5, p. 128; this formulation is also found in all the editions of the first volume of *Capital*.

with Marxist critique. Secondly, a discussion about the consequences of the Marxist critique of capitalism would be necessary if his conceptions of alienation were to be rejected for philosophical reasons of basically expecting too much of people? It would also have to be clarified whether this argumentative feature would automatically disqualify all aspects of Marxist critique of the market or whether this represents a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one for accepting markets philosophically. On the basis of a conception allowing alienation in principle, rejection of the market due to other specific characteristics or because it causes an unacceptable degree of alienation is also conceivable. Under the realistic assumption that experiences of alienation mandatorily belong to human life, certain kinds of alienation or too much of it are probably also undesirable.

In regard to alienation, we are not systematically faced with the alternative of *all or nothing*, which seems to be written into Marx's philosophical anthropology. Hegel's answer implies a gradualistic conception of alienation, whereby it still has to be clarified whether his theory of will commits him to the thesis that the market is an indispensable point of realization of recognition. This point would still remain open even if Hegel had shown that market was sufficient realization of recognition.

In regard to Marx, who not only has perfectionist anthropological ethics as his command, but also presents his critique of the market as a loss of autonomy, the situation becomes more complex. Its basic definition of autonomy is double-edged since it can be spelled out in the sense of the owner under private law or of individual authenticity. In addition, the term autonomy has a history of perfectionist and also deontological moments. For Marx, the situation is not always clear; and as for Hegel, I am not completely sure whether he uses a purely deontological definition of autonomy originating from Kant or from Fichte in the *Elements (Grundlinien)*. My supposition is rather that Hegel and Marx are also much closer here than is often assumed because they both wanted to achieve a synthesis of Fichte and Aristotle.

Marx's second normative critique, according to which the waged worker's autonomy is systematically undermined because he is at the mercy of market developments, presents no great difference to Hegel's view. In his critique, Marx rejects an ideal of autarchy and points out loss of recognition, which corresponds in many respects to what Hegel states in his analysis of the "rabble". There is no principle or categorical difference.

In Marx's later work, there are realistic limitations on these standards which do not really match with his polar conceptions of alienation: the idea that work cannot become a game, but must always mean bondage and hardship, is probably an implicit self-correction of the conception of alienation which Marx developed in his writing from 1844,²⁹ a concept which never completely disappears from his thoughts and is, in fact, conceptually embedded in the fundamental concepts of the theory of action and philosophic anthropology. Marx tries to lay out an interpretation of his metaphysics of the human species which is realistic for a complex social structure without ever completely disclosing it. Prima facie, however, his philosophical conception, which basically does not allow institutional agencies of the individual and sociality, demands exactly this strong requirement. If this interpretation is correct, each interpreter must decide which part of the Marxist conception has to be given up due to systematic reasons and which can be affiliated productively. The following two questions should be differentiated between in this consideration:

- (i) Does Marx's conception (including genus metaphysics, theory of action, the conceptions of alienation and recognition) allow non-intentional consequences of social cooperation as successful individual and generic self-realization in principle?
- (ii) Does Marx's conception of the relation between the individual and the species (in the case of human beings) demand a harmonistic image of the determination of collective goals?

These questions are not entirely independent of one another because not every answer to one will be compatible with every answer to the other. Nevertheless, insofar as they are independent, they allow various meaningful combinations of answers which I cannot pursue in this paper.

3. Prospects

²⁹ "Work cannot be a game, as desired by Fourier" is stated in *Grundrissen der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (MEGA 2, II.1-2, p. 589); and Marx states in the third volume of *Capital*: The realm of freedom actually begins where work that is determined by need and external expediency stops. (MEGA2, II. 15, p. 794).

To sum it up, it can be said that there are three levels of differences between Hegel and Marx in regard to the market or the question of the admissibility of non-intentional side-effects as a meaningful form of self-realization.

The *first* and easiest answer to the key issue in this article: between Hegel and Marx, there is only one tactical-political difference. The one (Hegel) believes we can realize the social-philosophical unfolding of containment of the market on the basis of moral and legal standards; the other (Marx), in contrast, thinks that the convictions people adjust to through market activities will undermine all other normative belief systems, with the result that the market cannot be contained. Whereas Hegel thinks normative containment can be conducted through internal connections to certain aspects of market activities and a comprehensive institutional framework, Marx concludes that complete renunciation of the paradigm characterized by private ownership of the means of production and wage labor is necessary. As a political actor, Marx supports all the reforms and improvements regarding the situation of the workers, but always emphasizes that such reforms will not solve the fundamental problem of human existence. Seen this way, the question is: Do we settle on an unpleasant situation or dream of a world without this kind of reified, self-instrumentalized intercourse with one another? And the follow-up question is, of course: How could this be designed institutionally?

Secondly, on the normative level, there is the question of whether it is not a dangerous idea to situate most of the self-realization of the individual within his/her embedding in the realization of the species? A lot of theoreticians take the dangers looming here as a reason to exclude perfectionist conceptions in general from practical philosophy. I, on the other hand, would like to propose the thesis that we have to remain within a perfectionist framework of ethics in order to be able to shed light on the problem in all its depth. It is only on this basis that we can even follow Hegel's or Marx's analyses and attain understanding of the problem behind them. It has to be clarified whether withdrawing instrumentalization in principle in certain situations and actions in human existence is intrinsically justified. Where and why is self-will destroyed under conditions subject to the egoistic logic of bartering? I am not sure what the difference sought regarding this normative question is because Hegel and Marx each integrate both sides in their conceptions. Hegel organizes his philosophy of right in normative spheres of self-will; Marx endorses an idealistic ideal of education which unites a radical individualist notion of autonomy and, likewise, solidary genus metaphysics.

Thirdly, a metaphysical difference is probably at the base of this. Hegel unfolds the relation of the separate, autonomous individual to the general in an exceedingly complex conception organized according to the principles of his logic as a theory of the objective mind. Marx, in contrast, usually reduces this relation to an ontological one between the biological species and the individual exemplar, if he even comments on it explicitly. The mediating role of autonomous individuality which Hegel conceives as references between me as an individual and me as part of a shared form of life which are partially mediated through the institutional structure is resolved by Marx in favor of direct close-range intuition, which he adopted from Feuerbach. At the same time, Marx makes use of an emphatic concept of separate individuals, almost in the sense of a private, universally educated individual. In this, he is substantially more individualistic than Hegel ever was. The two tendencies are unexpectedly parallel to one another in Marx's reasoning and always refer back to one another: radical emphasis on individual freedom and on immediacy. Both of these prevent any tolerance of all the forms of social mediation for stabilization which Hegel presents in *Elements (Grundlinien)*. Ultimately, for Marx, Hegel's forms of mediation can only be symptoms of permanent repair because the fundamental problem is not solved.

The answer to the question of whether this problem can be solved at all is or whether we should bid farewell to the idea of reconciliation is what makes the difference in all of it. In the end, we find the decisive answer neither in Hegel nor in Marx. Both philosophers struggle with similar problems because they are the problems of modern society and thus ultimately also the ones we face. The fundamental difference, which can only be understood through the history of philosophy, lies in the left-Hegelian, religion-critical attempt to resolve the absolute esprit into the objective: for Hegel, this reconciliation can ultimately only take place in individual and socially shared self-interpretation of the absolute spirit; this can be understood as practices of expressive self-description of the human-being which serve to contain alienation to which humans are inescapably exposed in the realm of the objective spirit because they are finite subjects. Marx wants to transfer this reconciliation into the objective mind, i.e. into die social world; for this, he uses Feuerbach's critique of religion with its anthropologization of religious conceptions as paradigmatic model. There is reason to believe that this causes permanent strain on individuals and social institutions for philosophical-anthropological reasons. Nevertheless, Hegel puts forth good reasons for his

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thesis that the objective mind remains finite and susceptible, and these reasons should still be taken seriously.

However, the goal could be to retain Marx's corrective in attenuated form in order to transfer as much as possible of the normative contents of his conceptions into the objective spirit. This would have to happen without lapsing into the assumption that the task is not completed until everything that Hegel conceives in the absolute spirit is transferred into the realm of the social. Otherwise, this leads us to thinkers like Ernst Bloch, who, in the end, thought that even biological death, as the highest form of alienation, has to be overcome through technical reconstruction of the human being. Then, at the latest, even the utopia of non-alienation turns into technical alienation, as celebrated in transhumanism nowadays, and is wondrously compatible with capitalism because it ultimately mutates into a variation of the ideology of individual fulfillment of the market and of preferences. It thus matters how we react to this fundamental difference – not only regarding this issue, but also in regard to others.