

Introduction

A Pragmatist Semantic Reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology*

I. The Focal Topic: The Content and Use of Concepts

This book presents a rational reconstruction of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It traces a trajectory through that rich, sprawling *Bildungsroman* of modernity that reveals the cumulative expression and development of a set of apparently disparate philosophical insights and innovations, whose ramifications are gradually unified into what finally emerges as a single compelling line of thought. The narrative I retrospectively discern within Hegel's is by no means the only one that can correctly and productively be recollected from the intricate and far-ranging story that he tells. Indeed, what is offered here is in many ways a severely selective reading. I am really concerned only with what he has to say insofar as it bears on *one* of the many topics he addresses. I believe it is an axial, organizing topic, and that focusing on it provides a useful perspective on all the rest. But the sharp focus involves real restrictions. Hewing rigorously to a thematic intensional restriction has extensional consequences: there are whole sections of the book, in other ways quite important ones, that are not so much as discussed here (for instance, *Observing Reason*, the entire *Religion* chapter, and substantial stretches of *Spirit*). Whatever does not show up as immediately bearing on and sufficiently advancing the emergence into explicitness of the account I see at the core of Hegel's enterprise is ruthlessly put to one side. (By the end of this book, this methodological

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acknowledgment will be visible as having the characteristic form of a recollective confession. As such, it is accordingly also a trusting recognitive petition for forgiveness by more capable readers—readers, ideally, expressively empowered by whatever this reading does manage to reveal. But that is a lesson that lies far ahead of us at this point.)

The defining subject that serves as both lens and filter for the present account is *conceptual content*. At the very center of Hegel's thought (to begin with, his metaphysics and logic) is a radically new conception of the conceptual. It understands as conceptually contentful anything that stands in relations of what he calls "determinate negation" and "mediation" to other such things. By "determinate negation," Hegel means material incompatibility or Aristotelian contrariety: relations of exclusion of the sort that **triangular** stands in to **circular** among properties of plane figures and **copper** stands in to **aluminum** among kinds of metals. It is *impossible* for one thing at one time to exhibit both properties. By "mediation"—a term inspired by the inference-facilitating role played by middle terms in Aristotelian syllogisms—Hegel means subjunctively robust relations of material consequence: relations of inclusion of the sort that **triangular** stands in to **polygonal** and **copper** to **electrical conductor**. It is *necessary* that if a thing exhibits one property, it exhibits the other.

This way of understanding conceptual contentfulness is nonpsychological, in the sense that it makes no essential reference to psychological acts of grasping or conceiving items that are conceptually articulated. It is crucial to Hegel's story that thoughts, too, stand to one another in relations of incompatibility and consequence. The thought that the coin is pure copper is incompatible with the thought that it is pure aluminum and has as a consequence that it is an electrical conductor. But objective properties and states of affairs also stand in corresponding relations to one another: the fact that the coin is pure copper is incompatible with its being pure aluminum and entails that it is an electrical conductor.

The kinds of relations of incompatibility and consequence that hold between objective states of affairs and the kinds that hold between subjective acts of thinking or judging are not the same. It is impossible for incompatible states of affairs to obtain or for one to obtain without its necessary consequence obtaining. It is *not impossible* to make incompatible claims or to fail to acknowledge a necessary consequence of a claim one has endorsed. It

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is merely *impermissible* to make claims or endorse judgments with incompatible contents, or to endorse a claim but not acknowledge its necessary consequences. One ought not to do so.

Hegel sees the deontic normative sense of “incompatible” and “consequence” that articulates the attitudes of knowing subjects and the alethic modal sense of those terms that articulates objective facts as deeply related. They are different *forms* that one identical conceptual *content* can take. The contents are thinkables and judgeables, and they can be facts. (Gottlob Frege says: “A fact is a thought that is true,” meaning by “thought” something thinkable, rather than an act of thinking.) This hylomorphic structure of form and content underlies Hegel’s *expressive* account of the relations between subjective thoughts and objective states of affairs in discursive practices of knowing and doing. It underwrites a conceptual realism that understands the objective world as always already in a conceptual (and so, ultimately, thinkable, intelligible) shape that it does not owe to any activity by the thinking subjects to whom it is in principle intelligible. (Nor, it should be said, does it owe anything to the thinking activity of any supersubject called “Geist.”) This conceptual realism is, however, an essential foundational element of Hegel’s idealism.

It is because I see the topic of conceptual content as a central, orienting concern of the *Phenomenology* that I call the reading I offer a *semantic* one. The use of this term is anachronistic, but not, I think, inapt or inaccurate. It picks out the Ariadne’s thread that is relied upon in this work to mark out a path through Hegel’s maze. As I understand him, the particular approach to the semantic understanding of content that Hegel adopts is a *pragmatist* one. By this I mean broadly that he thinks that what confers conceptual content on acts, attitudes, and linguistic expressions is the role they play in the practices their subjects engage in. On this broadly functionalist picture, meaning is to be understood in terms of use. Further, though there would *be* conceptually contentful facts about objects and properties standing in lawful relations even if there were not or had never been any thinking subjects, Hegel thinks that we cannot *understand* that conceptual structure of the objective world—understand what we are saying or thinking about it when we say or think that it is determinate (which he understands in the sense of having an objective modal structure articulated by relations of incompatibility and necessary consequence)—except as part of a story that includes what we are *doing*

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when we practically *take* or *treat* the world as consisting in such lawfully related determinate facts. The functional system that confers conceptual content on subjective attitudes must be considered in order to understand the conceptual content of objective states of affairs. That system opens outward from the cycle of perception, thought, and intentional action on the part of individual subjects to the network of social practices those subjects engage in, and then further to include the diachronic dimension of those practices, both looking backward recollectively to their historical antecedents and looking forward to their future development. In general, functionalist semantic stories understand contents holistically, in terms of their role in a larger system comprising many such contents. One of the striking and valuable features of Hegel's thought is how rigorously he thinks through the consequences of his semantic holism.

I am reading the *Phenomenology*, then, to see what Hegel has to teach us about the relations between meaning and use, conceptual content and the application of concepts (the topics, respectively, of semantics and pragmatics), and between normativity and modality, which articulate the different forms, subjective and objective, that conceptual content can take. As I understand him, he is promising to illuminate thereby the intentional semantic relations between knowing and acting subjects and the objects they know about and act on. While it is not controversial that Hegel addresses this latter issue, the present focus on the two former ones is unusual. It means the reading here proceeds in a direction orthogonal to that to be found in the extant literature—and so cannot find much help there. That fact—and the admitted anachronism of seeing him as a semantic theorist—raises the questions: Why should we think that Hegel is addressing these topics? How is it so much as possible for him to do so?

II. The Strategy of Semantic Descent

It is useful to begin a response to those questions by looking at two of Kant's master ideas, which together help to frame Hegel's agenda. The first is Kant's realization that in addition to concepts whose principal use is to describe and explain empirical goings on, there are concepts that play the distinctive expressive role of articulating features of the framework that makes description

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and explanation possible. These “pure concepts of the Understanding” are the ancestors of Hegel’s “speculative,” logical, or philosophical concepts. Like Kant’s categories, these are metaconcepts: concepts whose job it is to express key features of the use and content of the ground-level empirical and practical concepts Hegel calls “determinate” concepts.

Because these categorial concepts make explicit what is implicit in the use of *any* of the determinately contentful concepts applied in judging and acting intentionally, there are no *particular* empirical or practical concepts that one must grasp or have applied in order implicitly to grasp what the categorial concepts make explicit. As I would like to put the point, in knowing how (being able) to use ordinary concepts, one already knows how to do everything one needs to know how to do in order to grasp and apply the metaconcepts. In this sense, grasp of these higher-order concepts is *a priori*. Their contents are available independently of any particular use of ground-level concepts. Tellingly (for my story), among the principal candidates for concepts playing this metaconceptual expressive role are alethic modal concepts, on the empirical side of cognition, and deontic normative concepts, on the practical side of intentional action.

The discovery or invention of a kind of concept playing this distinctive sort of expressive role is one of the founding Big Ideas of German Idealism. The conception of such metaconcepts makes possible a new way of thinking about *self-consciousness*—and so, Hegel will insist, a new kind of self-consciousness. The categorial metaconcepts are the expressive organs of self-consciousness so understood. Concern with self-consciousness accordingly moves to center stage for this tradition. It is not surprising, then, that both Kant and Hegel spend most of their time and effort discussing and developing accounts of these framework-articulating concepts. In reading their texts it is easy to lose sight entirely of ordinary empirical and practical concepts, the determinate concepts that are the poor cousins of these exalted categorial and speculative-logical philosophical concepts. Yet I believe that the best way to understand what they are saying about their preferred topic of concepts operating in a pure, still stratosphere above the busy jostling and haggling of street-level judging and doing is precisely to focus on what those metaconcepts let us say about what is going on below: the clarifying perspective they provide on that messy, noisy spectacle. If the point of the higher-level concepts is to articulate the use and content of lower-level ones, then the cash value of an

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account of categorial metaconcepts is what it has to teach us about ordinary ground-level empirical and practical concepts.

Accordingly, I recommend, and practice in what follows, a strategy of *semantic descent*. This entails at every point keeping our narrative eyes firmly focused on what claims about the defects and virtues of the various “shapes” of self-consciousness mean for our understanding of the use and content of ordinary determinate empirical concepts. This is not Hegel’s own practice. He descends to earth occasionally to offer examples (for instance, the sample empirical judgments that are discussed along the way in the first two *Consciousness* chapters), but his gaze is generally directed upward, remaining fixed on the lofty Empyrean realm of philosophical metaconcepts. Indeed, as we shall see, his whole discussion is framed by the even higher-order distinction between the *meta*-metaconcepts of *Vernunft* and *Verstand* (conceptual and representational thinking), which articulate his understanding of the crucially different structures exhibited by the constellations of metaconcepts he and Kant deploy. His readers almost always follow Hegel’s example in this regard. But these metacategorical concepts, too, I claim, are best understood in terms of how they counsel us to think about the use and content of ordinary ground-level determinate empirical and practical concepts. The methodology of semantic descent that orients the present reading accordingly sets it substantially apart from the mainstream tradition of Hegel interpretation.

As I read him, Hegel understands the *determinateness* of ground-level determinate concepts in terms of the process of *determining* their contents. Thinking of the determinateness of conceptual content in terms of such a *process*, rather than in terms of the *property* of having sharp, complete boundaries, as Kant and Frege do, is a hallmark of understanding it according to the dynamic metacategories of *Vernunft* rather than the static metacategories of *Verstand*. The process that determines conceptual contents Hegel calls “experience” [Erfahrung]. The contents so determined articulate the norms for proper application of those concepts. The process of experience is accordingly understood as being *both* the process of *applying* determinate conceptually contentful norms in judgment and intentional action and the process of *instituting* those determinate conceptually contentful norms. Regarded *retrospectively*, that process of determination is one of discovery. It is the gradual, progressive *finding* out what the content has been all along: what norm implicitly governed and governs applications of the

concept in judgment. Regarded *prospectively*, that same process of determination is one of invention. It is the gradual, progressive fixing of the content: *making* a partially indeterminate content ever *more* determinate by applying the concept in novel circumstances. Because he thinks of determinateness in this way, Hegel rejects the possibility of conveying the content of a concept by defining it. As a matter of deep pragmatist semantic principle, the *only* way to understand the content of a determinate concept, he thinks, is by rationally reconstructing an expressively progressive history of the process of determining it.

This is Hegel's model of conceptual content, and he extends it to the content of his favored speculative metaconcepts—which are also to be understood as functioning in the way described and prescribed by the meta-metaconcept of *Vernunft*. So he takes it that the only way to understand or convey the content of the metaconcepts that articulate various forms of self-consciousness (such as the distinction between what things are “in themselves” and what they are “for consciousness”), however adequate or inadequate the version of the metaconcepts being considered, is by recollectively rehearsing a possible course of expressively progressive development that culminates in the content in question. And that is exactly what he does to convey the contents of his speculative and logical metaconcepts. In the *Phenomenology* he rationally reconstructs a process of determination of their contents that rehearses a developmental trajectory selected from the actual history of implicit self-understandings in terms of less and less defective, more and more adequate versions of those metaconcepts. In the *Science of Logic* he rationally reconstructs a process of determination of (essentially) those same contents that rehearses a developmental trajectory defined by the content and structure of the logical metaconcepts as eventually adequately conceived, owing nothing to the vagaries of the wandering path and stumbling progress by which we actually eventually arrived at that adequate conception.

Understanding the basic concepts deployed to articulate Hegel's philosophical views generically as metaconcepts, like the Kantian pure concepts of the Understanding that are their inspiration and to which they are heirs and successors, underlines the qualitative difference in expressive role between ground-level determinate concepts and logical and philosophical ones, however. Even if Hegel is right—as I think he more or less is—about the form that grasp or understanding of the content of ordinary ground-level

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determinate concepts must take, it does not follow that that same form is the only one available for understanding the content of philosophical metaconcepts. Precisely because they are metaconcepts, because they do play the special expressive role of making explicit what is implicit in the use and content of ordinary empirical and practical concepts, there is another route that can be taken to understand their use and content. That is the route of semantic descent. We can understand them in terms of what they make it possible for us to say and understand about the use and content of those ground-level determinate concepts. There is no corresponding way to understand or convey the contents of those ground-level empirical and practical concepts, because there is nothing else to which their use and content stands as the use and content of philosophical metaconcepts stands to theirs.

Hegel does not himself adopt the way of proceeding I am recommending. He does not avail himself of the possibility for understanding speculative concepts differently from determinate concepts, in virtue of the difference in their expressive roles. He thinks that the nature of conceptual content at either level dictates that they must be understood in the same retrospective-recollective historical fashion. So adopting the hermeneutic strategy of semantic descent involves disagreeing with Hegel. It is in so far such a strategy for a *critical* reading of Hegel—a reading that seeks to recruit and deploy conceptual resources he himself has provided, to do something differently than he did. I need not claim that semantic descent is a *better* way to do that than the one Hegel himself pursued. The result of laying the expository method of semantic descent alongside Hegel's own exposition can count as progress just in the way binocular vision is superior to the merely monocular. It is true that there is a special danger courted (and perhaps a dangerous hubris displayed) in pursuing this sort of explanatory undertaking by means quite different from his, when what is to be conveyed in the end purports to be the content of Hegel's own views. My ultimate concern, however, is to make explicit the most important lessons Hegel has to teach us, what we can learn from him, about the use and content of ordinary empirical descriptive and practical concepts—and so to improve the expressive power of the metaconcepts that articulate our own semantic and pragmatic self-consciousness. It is to that end that I pursue here a critical reading that is guided by the precept of semantic descent.

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III. The Social Dimension of Discursiveness: Normativity and Recognition

The second master idea of Kant's that inspires Hegel's story is his revolutionary appreciation of the essentially *normative* character of discursive intentionality. Kant understands judgments and intentional doings as differing from the responses of nondiscursive creatures in being performances that their subjects are in a distinctive sense *responsible* for. He sees them as exercises of a special sort of *authority*: the authority that discursive subjects have to undertake *commitments* as to how things are or shall be. Sapient awareness, apperception, is seen as a normative phenomenon, the discursive realm as a normative realm.

Kant breaks with the tradition he inherits in taking judgment to be the minimal unit of apperceptive awareness because it is the minimal unit for which one can take responsibility, the minimal unit to which one can commit oneself. (Frege will second this idea by taking thoughts to be the minimal units to which pragmatic force can attach, and Wittgenstein will understand sentences as the minimal units with which one can make a move in a language game.) Judgments (and endorsements of practical maxims) are still, as the tradition had it, taken to be applications of concepts. But concepts are now understood as "functions of judgments." That is, they are understood in terms of their functional role in determining what one makes oneself responsible for or commits oneself to in judging. At the center of what one is responsible for is having *reasons* for judging or acting as one does. Concepts are rules that determine what counts as a reason for (or against) applying them, and what applying them counts as a reason for (or against). In Kant's usage, "discursive" means "of or pertaining to the use of concepts." Discursive beings live and move and have their being in a normative space of reasons. Discursive activity is the application of concepts, which is undertaking doxastic and practical responsibilities or commitments by binding oneself by rules in the form of concepts. Where the Early Modern philosophical tradition had focused on our grip on concepts, Kant shifts attention to their grip on us, to the normative bindingness ("Verbindlichkeit") of these rules.

The subjective form of judgment, the "I think" that Kant says can accompany all our representations, and so is the emptiest of all, marks who takes

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responsibility *for* the judgment. The objective form of judgment, the “object = X,” marks what the judging subject makes itself responsible *to* in judging. This is the *objectivity* of judgment, its representational purport. Kant understands it in terms of normative claims to validity (“Gültigkeit,” “gelten”). That is to say that he understands representational purport, the way in which its acts show up to the subject *as* representings, as intentionally pointing beyond themselves to something represented by them, in thoroughly normative terms. Something is a *representing* insofar as it is *responsible* for its correctness to what thereby counts as represented by it—that is, insofar as it acknowledges the *authority* what thereby counts as represented by it exerts over assessments of the correctness (validity) of representings of it.

Because he understands discursive *activity* (Fregean force, what one is doing in applying concepts) in these normative terms, Kant can be said (in the anachronistic vocabulary I am using to reconstruct the outlines of these views) to put forward a normative *pragmatics*. Further, in his *semantic* theory, he understands discursive *content* functionally, in terms of the role contentful items (applications of concepts) play in that discursive activity. What one makes oneself responsible for *doing* in judging is rationally integrating the new commitment one undertakes with one’s prior commitments so as to yield a constellation of doxastic commitments that exhibits the sort of rational (“synthetic”) unity distinctive of apperception. For concepts to play their functional role as rules for doing that, their contents must determine what would be reasons for or against each particular application of those concepts in judgment, and what those applications of concepts would be reasons for or against. And the objective representational dimension of discursive content, too, is understood in terms of the normative pragmatics. In reading off his semantic account of conceptual and representational content from the theory of discursive activity (Fregean “force”) that is his pragmatics, Kant is adopting a broadly *pragmatist* explanatory strategy.

All of these innovative features of Kant’s views are immensely influential for Hegel: the revolutionary normative pragmatic theory of discursive activity, the pragmatist strategy of understanding semantics in terms of pragmatics, and the resulting normatively inflected semantic theory of conceptual content and its representational dimension. Indeed, I have tried here to begin to sketch the outlines of how Kant looks to Hegel: the lessons he takes himself to have learned, the features of Kant’s semantics and pragmatics that

Hegel takes up and builds on. I have already gestured at Hegel's nonpsychological conception of the conceptual as what is articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence. It is recognizably a successor-conception inspired by some features of Kant's. Two other important dimensions along which Hegel builds on, transforms, and develops Kant's ideas are his *social* account of normativity in terms of *recognition*, and his *historical* account of the representational dimension of conceptual content in terms of *recollective rationality*. Most of the work involved in elaborating the pragmatist semantic reading of the *Phenomenology* presented in the body of this book consists of unpacking these two guiding ideas, and understanding the many-layered relations between them.

Descartes understood the distinction between minded creatures and everything else in terms of a distinction between two kinds of stuff: mental and physical. Kant's normative reconceiving of sapience replaces Descartes's *ontological* distinction with a *deontological* one. Discursive creatures are distinguished by having rational obligations. They are subject to normative assessment of the extent to which what they think and do accords with their commitments or responsibilities. Descartes's division of things into minds and bodies, thinking substance and extended substance, notoriously verges on a dualism: a distinction drawn in terms that makes essential relations between the distinguished items unintelligible. There is at least a potential danger that Kant's alternative division of things into facts and norms, a causal realm subject to laws expressible in alethic modal terms and a discursive realm subject to rules expressible in deontic normative terms, similarly devolves into a dualism. Whether it does or not turns on how norms are understood, and how they are understood to be related to the nonnormative objective world the subjects of those norms know of and act on.

Kant's insight into the normative character of judging and acting intentionally renders philosophically urgent the understanding of discursive normativity. For he understands all empirical activity, whether cognitive or practical, to consist in the application of concepts—that is, in subjects binding themselves by conceptual norms. But the nature of his own account of the origins of conceptual norms and the nature of their normative binding force is somewhat obscure. And it is in any case deeply entwined with some of the most problematic aspects of his transcendental idealism, such as the distinction between the activities of noumenal and phenomenal selves. However it

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is with Kant, Hegel brings the normative down to earth by explaining discursive norms as the products of social practices. (John Haugeland suggested that the slogan for this explanatory strategy is “All transcendental constitution is social institution.”) Hegel understands normative statuses of authority and responsibility as the products of normative attitudes of subjects, who practically take or treat each other *as* authoritative or responsible, who acknowledge or attribute authority and hold each other responsible. His generic term for social-practical attitudes of taking or treating someone as the subject of normative statuses is “recognition” [Anerkennung]. He takes it that normative statuses such as authority and responsibility are instituted when recognitive attitudes have a distinctive *social* structure: when they take the form of *mutual or reciprocal* [gegenseitig] recognition.

The project of understanding norms as the products of social practices offers the possibility of *naturalizing* them, in a broad sense. For it invites us to think of the norms that transform us into discursive beings by governing our activities—*Bildung*, the culture that is our second nature, Hegelian *Geist*—as instituted by those very activities. Such an approach presents us as self-constituting beings: creatures of norms we ourselves create. It accordingly holds out the prospect of responding to the looming threat of a Kantian dualism being put in place of Cartesian dualism by situating norms in nature, by construing them as the results of our social interactions with one another.

IV. The Historical Dimension of Discursiveness: Recollective Rationality

Looking back from our present vantage point, we can recognize a more recent version of a picture with this general shape. The later Wittgenstein independently arrived at an appreciation of the essentially normative significance of the meanings of linguistic expressions and the contents of intentional states. He, too, sought to domesticate and in a broad sense naturalize this potentially puzzling constitutive feature of our discursiveness by appealing to the idea of norms implicit in social practices. The normative significance of a signpost—in virtue of which it *guides* us, can be *misunderstood* or responded to *correctly*, what we abstract from when we consider it “just as a piece of wood”—is to be understood in terms of the role it plays in

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the social practices (“customs, uses, institutions”) of those for whom it functions *as* a signpost.

For Hegel, as for Wittgenstein, an account of this kind raises a fundamental question. If we make the norms (institute them by our social-practical attitudes), then how can they genuinely bind us? In what sense are we constrained by them? The worry is that if we get to decide (our practical attitudes determine) not only *that* we are responsible (a matter of Fregean force or normative status), but *what* we are responsible for (the content of the responsibility), then it is hard to see how we have normatively *bound* ourselves at all. As Wittgenstein puts the point: “One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can’t talk about ‘right.’”¹ We can think of this issue in terms of a distinction between norms (or normative statuses) and normative attitudes. This is the distinction between what we are *actually* responsible for or committed to (the content of those normative statuses), on the one hand, and what responsibilities or commitments we acknowledge or attribute, what we practically *take* or *treat* ourselves or others as responsible for or committed to, on the other. The point of the Wittgenstein quote is that the norms or statuses must be intelligible as having a certain kind of independence from practitioners’ attitudes toward them if they are to be intelligible as serving as authoritative standards for normative assessments of the propriety or correctness of those attitudes.²

There is at least a *prima facie* tension between this platitudinous point and the idea that norms are instituted by practical attitudes. At the least it seems that some distinction must be made between the attitudes (applications of concepts, acknowledgments and attributions of commitments) that are governed by discursive norms and those that institute those norms. Some readers of Wittgenstein have been tempted by the idea that his emphasis on the social character of the practices in which discursive norms are implicit means that the distinction wanted is that between communal attitudes, which institute the norms, and individual ones, which are subject to assessment according to those norms. I do not think that is right. (For one thing, communities do not have attitudes, individuals do.) But however it is with Wittgenstein, Hegel’s invocation of the social character of discursive normativity, in the form of the claim that normative statuses are instituted only by reciprocal cognitive attitudes, works quite differently. Here what does the work is the difference in social perspective between those who *acknowledge* responsibility (or claim

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authority) and those who *attribute* that responsibility, those who *hold* the subject responsible. In Hegel's terms, what a self-consciousness is *in itself* (its normative statuses) depends on both what it is *for itself* and what it is *for others*. These two kinds of status-instituting normative attitudes are distinguished by their different social perspectives, as self- or other-directed.

Which others matter for the institution of a subject's normative statuses is determined by the subject's own recognitive attitudes: who it recognizes, in the sense of granting (attributing to) them the authority to hold it responsible. But it is not determined by those attitudes alone. Communities do come into the picture. What Hegel calls social "substance" is synthesized by mutual recognition. In a paradigm of Hegel's use of these logical metaconcepts, *universals* (communities) do arise from recognitive relations among *particular* living beings, who become self-conscious *individual* normative subjects by adopting recognitive practical attitudes toward one another. But Hegelian communities are constellations of reciprocal-recognitive dyads. The recognitive attitudes of others, who hold one responsible, are equally as important as the normative attitudes of one who acknowledges a commitment. Hegel's version is second-personal, perspectival "I"-*"thou"* sociality, not first-personal, communal "I"-*"we"* sociality.

Further, the diachronic *historical* dimension of recognitive communities is at the center of Hegel's story about how and in exactly what sense determinately contentful normative statuses precipitate out of the practical attitudes of subjects who *institute* conceptual norms by *applying* them in their judgments and intentional actions. The challenge for social-practical accounts of normative statuses is to reconcile the attitude-dependence of normative statuses with the status-dependence of normative attitudes. "Dependence" and "independence," when applied to knowing and acting subjects, are Hegel's way of talking about normative statuses of *responsibility* and *authority*, respectively. So appreciating the attitude-dependence of normative statuses is appreciating a kind of authority attitudes have over statuses, a kind of responsibility statuses have to attitudes. This is the Enlightenment idea that there are no statuses of authority and responsibility apart from subjects' practical attitudes of taking or treating each other *as* authoritative and responsible. Appreciating the status-dependence of normative attitudes is appreciating the kind of authority statuses have over attitudes, the sense in which attitudes are responsible to the statuses they acknowledge and attribute. This is the

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traditional idea that attitudes are normatively governed by the statuses they acknowledge and attribute—that is, by what subjects are actually responsible for and what authority they actually have. For the attitudes are correct just insofar as the subjects really do have the statuses of responsibility or authority that are acknowledged or attributed. All of this vocabulary, both Hegel's and the regimented vocabulary into which I am translating it, belongs to *pragmatics*, as I am using the term: the theory of use, of Fregean force, of what one is *doing* in applying concepts by adopting intentional states or using linguistic expressions. But corresponding to the reciprocal dependence of normative statuses and attitudes on the side of pragmatics, Hegel envisages a reciprocal dependence of meaning and use, of the contents of concepts and the practices of applying them. This is the sophisticated theory I have referred to under the heading of Hegel's *pragmatism* about the relations between pragmatics and semantics.

Kant is at one with his rationalist predecessors in taking it that empirical and practical activity, which he understands as the application of concepts in judging and endorsing practical maxims, presupposes the antecedent availability of determinately contentful concepts. The determinate content of those concepts settles just what one has made oneself responsible for in judging or intending, what norm one has bound oneself by, how one has committed oneself to things being or being made to be. That is to say that it is the conceptual content of the rule one has applied that determines the normative standard by which the correctness or success of one's discursive attitudes is to be assessed. Here we might think of the two-stage process Rudolf Carnap describes for formally regimented languages: first specify the language (the meanings or contents of the expressions to be used), and then formulate a theory (the beliefs one adopts or commitments one undertakes by asserting sentences of that language). W. V. O. Quine responded to Carnap that that model of the use of artificial, formal languages is misleading in the case of natural languages. There we find only the *use* of linguistic expressions, which must be intelligible both as the application of meaningful expressions and as all there is to confer meanings on the expressions being applied. In a parallel way, Hegel balances Kant's insight that judging and acting presupposes the availability of determinately contentful conceptual norms to bind oneself by and hold others to, with the insight that our practical recognitive attitudes of acknowledging and attributing commitments are all there is to

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establish the association of determinate conceptual contents with those attitudes—and so all there is to fix determinate norms or normative statuses they are attitudes toward. The issue of how to make sense of normative attitudes as genuinely norm-governed once we understand the norms as instituted by such attitudes, and the issue of how to understand normative attitudes as instituting norms with determinate conceptual contents are two sides of one coin. That is why in Saul Kripke's presentation of Wittgenstein, the challenge for a view that understands conceptual norms as instituted by attitudes takes the form of asking how any actual sequence of prior applications of an expression (practical attitudes) can confer on it a determinate meaning or content that codifies a norm for assessing the correctness of an indefinite number of novel potential applications of that expression.

As I read him, Hegel fully appreciated the ramifications of this issue already when he wrote the *Phenomenology* in 1806. Unlike Wittgenstein, he responds by elaborating an intricate systematic theory explaining just how the adoption of normative attitudes (the application of expressions in judgment and intentional action) can institute determinately contentful norms by conferring meanings or conceptual contents that semantically transcend the attitudes that institute those norms and confer those meanings. More than anything else, it is this story that I see as the feature of Hegel's thought that most deserves to be taken up as a contribution to the contemporary philosophical conversation. It is an account that reconciles the status-dependence of normative attitudes with the attitude-dependence of normative statuses, in the form of an account of the process of determining conceptual contents by applying them in actual circumstances. At its heart are the two notions of recognition and recollection, articulating the social and historical dimensions of discursive normativity. As the social-recognitive dimension of the account turns essentially on a distinction of social perspective between attitudes of acknowledging and attributing normative statuses (and the related distinction between recognizing and being recognized), the historical-recollective dimension of the account turns on a distinction of temporal perspective. (As the most common misunderstanding of the social dimension sees individuals as bound to accord with communal regularities, the most common misunderstanding of the historical dimension sees the present as answerable to an eventual ideal Peircean consensus. Both are caricatures of Hegel's much more sophisticated account.)

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Viewed prospectively, the process of experience is one of progressively determining conceptual contents in the sense of *making* those contents more determinate, by applying them or withholding their application in novel circumstances. This is the perspective that makes visible the attitude-dependence of normative statuses: the conferral of meaning by use. Viewed retrospectively, the process of experience is one of determining conceptual contents in the sense of progressively *finding out* more about the boundaries of concepts that show up as having implicitly all along already been fully determinate. This is the perspective that makes visible the status-dependence of normative attitudes: meaning or conceptual content as normatively governing applications or uses of it. It is of the essence of construing things according to the metacategories of *Vernunft* that neither of these perspectives is intelligible apart from its relation to the other, and that the correctness of each does not exclude but rather entails the correctness of the other.

At the core of this story is one of Hegel's principal innovations: his conception of *recollective rationality*. Exercising this kind of rationality is retrospectively rationally reconstructing the various applications of a concept, selecting a trajectory through the actual uses that picks out a sequence that is *expressively progressive*. That is one that has the form of the gradual, cumulative revelation, the emergence into ever-greater explicitness, of the contours of a determinately contentful norm that is seen to have been implicit all along. According to the retrospective recollective story, it is implicit as having *normatively governed* applications of the concept, in the dual sense of serving as a normative standard for assessments of the correctness of those applications and as what those applications were subjunctively sensitive to, in that according to the recollective rationalization of them, if the norm *had* had a different content, the applications *would have* been different. It is just these dual conditions that set the criteria of selection for the inclusion of prior actual attitudes in the progressive precedential path by which the content is taken to be determined. Each experiential episode must reveal (express) some further aspect of a determinately contentful norm according to which it is taken to be correct (a deontic normative matter) and to which it is taken to have been sensitive (an alethic modal matter). For Hegel, telling a retrospective recollective reconstructive story of this kind is turning a past into a history. It is giving contingent concrete actuality the normative form of necessity, or revealing that normative significance. It is mediating the

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immediate: giving conceptual form to what is brutally there, in the sense of objectively actual or sensuously given, or making it visible as already being in conceptual form. Recollection is the distinctive new form of reason that Hegel both invents and discovers—depending on which of the complementary historical perspectives one adopts toward his achievement.

Recollection is the basis of Hegel's account of *expression*: the relation between what is implicit and the explicit expression of it. He understands both the cognitive and the practical phases of experience as the emergence into (greater) explicitness of what can recollectively be seen to have been implicit all along.

Already something thought, the *content* is the property of substance; existence [Dasein] has no more to be changed into the form of what is in-itself and implicit [Ansichsein], but only the *implicit*—no longer merely something primitive, or lying hidden within existence, but already present as a *recollection*—into the form of what is *explicit*, of what is objective to self [Fürsichsein]. [PG 29]³

On the cognitive side, what is implicit is the facts, what the objective world determinately is in itself (“an sich”). On the practical side, what is implicit is the agent's intention (“Absicht”), what the acting subject is in itself. Hegel explains what is implicit in terms of the process of expressing it: the process of making it explicit. Recollection retrospectively rationally reconstructs a course of experience as expressively progressive: as the gradual emergence into greater explicitness of facts and intentions exhibited as having normatively governed and guided the process by which we come to know the world and our doings as they are in themselves. This account of expression in terms of recollection in turn grounds an account of representation in terms of expression. What is made explicit, what things are in themselves, is the reality that is represented by its appearances to consciousness, what that reality is for consciousness. What reality is for consciousness shows up as explicit representings of it. Hegel's pragmatic metaconcept of recollection accordingly funds an expressive account of the representational dimension of conceptual content.

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**V. Cognition, Recognition, and Recollection:
Semantics and Epistemology, Normative Pragmatics,
and the Historicity of *Geist***

The body of this book is in Hegel's sense a retrospective recollection of the *Phenomenology*. That work is rationally reconstructed here in the form of a selective trajectory guided by the goal of highlighting the emergence in it of Hegel's social recognitive normative pragmatics, the distinctive holistic semantics he elaborates in terms of that pragmatics, and his original historical recollective account of the representational dimension of conceptual content. It is in terms of retrospective recollection that we are to understand both the determinateness of conceptual content and the norm-governedness of applications of determinately contentful concepts in empirical judgment and practical exercises of intentional agency. That expressive-recollective story explains the reciprocal relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses: the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and the status-dependence of normative attitudes. The expressive-recollective account of representation is also the basis on which we are to understand the intentional relations between the objective realm and the subjective realm: between conceptually contentful items articulated by incompatibilities and consequences specified in their objective form by alethic modal terms and conceptually contentful items articulated by incompatibilities and consequences specified in their subjective form by deontic normative terms. Recollection is accordingly the key to understanding the relation between Hegel's semantics (theory of conceptual content) and normative pragmatics (account of the practical attitudes that are the use or application of concepts). This is his pragmatism as recollective conceptual idealism. Finally, the new kind of theoretical self-consciousness we gain from Hegel's phenomenological recollection is envisaged as making possible a new form of practical normativity. The door is opened to the achievement of a new form of *Geist* when norm-instituting *recognitive* practices and practical attitudes take the form of norm-acknowledging *recollective* practices and practical attitudes. When recognition takes the magnanimous form of recollection, it is *forgiveness*, the attitude that institutes normativity as fully self-conscious *trust*.

The order of exposition here accordingly follows that of Hegel's narrative. The exception is that Hegel's *Preface*—which, like most prefaces, was written after the rest of the work, and which, unlike most prefaces, is hardly intelligible

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without having read the book it is a preface to—is principally discussed here at the end of the book, in the Conclusion. Part One of this book (comprising the first seven chapters) addresses Hegel’s semantics, in a very broad sense. It introduces his understanding of conceptual content. And it considers his account of the intentional relations between knowing subjects and the objective world they know about, how he understands what is right about thinking of those relations in metaconceptual terms of representation, and how he thinks we should move beyond narrowly representational metaconceptions to more encompassing *expressive* ones. Hegel follows Kant in tracing epistemological issues back to their semantic presuppositions. This strategy is productive throughout the early parts of the book, from its first appearance in the *Introduction*, through the discussion of sense experience and observational knowledge in *Sense Certainty* and *Perception*, to the sophisticated philosophy of science of *Force and Understanding*.

The eighteen paragraphs of Hegel’s *Introduction* are addressed at length, in the first three chapters. The reason for this extended attention to such a short stretch of text is that it is here that I introduce the strategy of semantic descent and give it an initial strenuous workout. Every indication on the surface of the text of the *Introduction* points to its principal topic being found at the metalevel of what he there calls “shapes of consciousness.” The discussion of the experience of error and contradiction, which we are enjoined not to see as a “path of despair” leading to skepticism, seems clearly addressed to explicating the kind of internal breakdown of the metaconceptual categories in terms of which consciousness understands its own cognitive activities that will lead us from cognitive self-consciousness in the forms Hegel calls “sense certainty” to cognitive self-consciousness in the forms Hegel calls “perception,” and from there to the forms Hegel rehearses under the title of “understanding.” The *Introduction* seems evidently to have the goal of in this sense teaching us to read the book to which it is an introduction: a phenomenology of categorial shapes of consciousness. And this impression is correct—as far as it goes. For I claim that in addition to that goal, the *Introduction* also aims to teach us important lessons about how we will eventually learn to understand the experience of applying and determining the content of ordinary, ground-level, empirical descriptive concepts, once Hegel has, by rehearsing a recollective retrospective rational reconstruction at the metalevel (a phenomenology), given us adequate metaconcepts to do so. Arguing for that

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surprising conclusion requires reading the text in relatively minute detail according to that strategy of semantic descent.

It turns out that the text does bear such a reading. Good sense can be made of it throughout, from the opening discussion of traditional representational epistemological models right through to the most puzzling passages at the end about adjusting the object of knowledge to match our knowledge of it, and the emergence of the “second, new, true object.” Along the way we can see Hegel using the discussion of the experience of error to introduce the basic outlines of the positive account of representation that he will recommend to replace the defective traditional ways of thinking about representation that lead to the knowledge-as-instrument and knowledge-as-medium models, which he opens by criticizing as making us patsies for skepticism. That a reading in terms of semantic descent is so much as possible is strong evidence for the viability of the project of understanding Hegel’s metaconcepts in terms of what they let us say about the use and content of ground-level determinate concepts. No doubt approaching the *Introduction* in these terms is unusual. But to reject it out of hand would require treating the fact that it sustains a detailed reading by semantic descent as well as one in terms of shapes of (what are later revealed to be self-)consciousness as just an astonishing coincidence. Working out an informative way of understanding the *Introduction* as also teaching us about the use and content of determinate, ground-level, descriptive, empirical concepts invites us to explore the possibility that throughout the work the discussion is conducted at both levels—that at *every* point we can learn as much about ordinary concepts as we do about the speculative philosophical metaconcepts whose distinctive expressive role it is to make explicit the use of those ground-level concepts. (Recollection is the kind of practical hermeneutic making that is successful just insofar as what results is a revelatory cognitive finding.)

Following up on the lessons about empirical concepts we can find in the *Introduction*, the *Consciousness* chapters address the conceptual articulation of the objective world, and our knowledge of it. It is widely appreciated that the origins of Wilfrid Sellars’s critique of what he calls the “Myth of the Given” are to be found in Hegel’s *Sense Certainty* chapter. Sellars himself points to this by opening his essay with an explicit acknowledgment of the kinship between the line of argument he will pursue and that of “Hegel, that great foe of immediacy.”⁴ By this he means that Hegel, like Sellars, denies the

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intelligibility of any concept of a kind of knowledge that is purely immediate, that involves no appeal to inferential abilities or the consequential relations they acknowledge (Hegel's "mediation"). Both philosophers insist that though observational judgments can be arrived at noninferentially—i.e., by processes other than inference—for them to be determinately contentful in a way that makes them potentially cognitively significant they must stand in relations of material consequence and incompatibility to other such contents. That is, they must be *conceptually* contentful. There can be no knowledge without content, and determinate conceptual content must be "thoroughly mediated." Both philosophers accordingly endorse a kind of semantic holism: grasp of any conceptual contents requires grasp of many others, and of the relations among them. The *Consciousness* chapters unpack and gradually reveal the fine structure of this holism, and the relations between sensuous immediacy and conceptually "mediated" content it involves.

Hegel's strategy is to understand immediacy in terms of the role it plays in determining conceptual content. That role is as the source of friction in virtue of which any constellation of judgments and determinate concepts is guaranteed to be unstable—in the sense that applying those conceptual norms correctly in response to the promptings of the senses is bound to lead to commitments that are incompatible according to those same norms. It is of the essence of those conceptual norms to oblige us, when confronted by incompatible commitments, to *do* something, to *change* our commitments: not only to relinquish some judgments and adopt others, but also to alter the commitments concerning what follows from what and what is incompatible with what that articulate the contents of the determinate empirical concepts being applied in those judgments. This is the process of further determining the contents of those concepts.

That sort of practical doing is what Hegel calls "experience" [Erfahrung]. He understands it as a multiphase process. He is concerned to explain how what knowing subjects do in the process of experiencing constitutes practically taking or treating their commitments (what things are for them) as answering for their correctness to how things objectively are (what they are in themselves). The key is to be found in the normative requirement that a proposed repair of acknowledged incompatibilities be justified by a retrospective recollective reconstruction that integrates it into a larger course of experience that is given the form of a cumulative, expressively progressive

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process revealing to consciousness how things have implicitly all along been, in themselves.

The account of what subjects must do to be acknowledging the authority of how things are in themselves over how they are for empirical consciousness is gradually deepened by rehearsing the development of the categorial structure the objective world is taken to have. It is a development to ever more holistic metaconceptions, as the implicit fine structure of our empirical understanding is progressively revealed. Observable features of the world are unfolded into facts about the observable properties of objects. Thinking about the relations of material incompatibility (“determinate negation”) and consequence (“mediation”) in virtue of which they are determinate makes intelligible the notion of purely theoretical objects and properties. Allegorized as “forces,” theoretical things are understood as differing from observable ones methodologically or epistemologically, rather than ontologically. They are the ones that are accessible to or knowable by subjects only by processes of inference.

One conclusion that emerges is that the incompatibility-and-consequence relations that articulate the contents of both theoretical and observational concepts must be understood to be subjunctively robust. By engaging in inferences tracking those relations, experiencing subjects practically confront not only facts, but the lawful relations of consequence and incompatibility that make those facts both determinate and cognitively accessible. Hegel argues that we can understand the *meaning* of the categorial concepts that articulate our understanding of the structure of the objective world—concepts such as object, property, fact, and law—only by understanding what we have to *do* to count as practically taking or treating the world *as* having such structure. What we must do is *use* singular terms and predicates to refer and describe, *use* declarative sentences to assert and state facts, *use* alethic modal vocabulary to codify laws in the form of inference licenses, and *use* those laws to explain facts.

It is this pragmatist semantic analysis that provides Hegel’s expository rationale for turning attention next to the nature of the norms governing the practices that reveal the intricately conceptually structured objective world to the subjects who engage in those practices of *Erfahrung*. Part Two (Chapters 8–12) of this book addresses Hegel’s normative pragmatics. This includes his understanding of norms as socially instituted by attitudes of reciprocal

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recognition and the introduction of the historical dimension of the determination of conceptual contents by exercises of recollective rationality, which is modeled on a distinctive understanding of intentional agency.

The *Self-Consciousness* chapters offer an account of normativity and normative subjects. Hegel begins with an account of self-consciousness as originating in desire. The treatment of *Self-Consciousness* here begins in Chapter 8 with a rational reconstruction of a model of nonnormative, and so preapperceptive, orectic awareness that is elaborated from the triadic structure of sentient organic desire. On this basis a story is told about the emergence of social norms from organic nature. This is a down payment on a response to the threat of a norm/nature dualism. (That response is completed in the diagnosis of the mistake that is the common root of such dualisms and of reductive naturalism about norms that emerges from reading the allegory of the hero and his valet at the end of the discussion of *Spirit*, in Part Three.)

Next, a regimented translation is offered of the terminology Hegel uses to talk about normativity. What self-conscious individual normative subjects are “in themselves” for Hegel is understood as a way of talking about their normative statuses. Hegel talks about these in terms of “independence” and “dependence.” Those terms are rendered as “authority” and “responsibility.” What self-conscious individual normative subjects are “for themselves” and “for others” are understood as normative attitudes: attitudes of *acknowledging* responsibility or claiming authority oneself, and attitudes of *attributing* responsibility or authority to others, respectively.

That regimented vocabulary is then used to formulate detailed specifications of two ways of understanding the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes: Kant’s autonomy model and Hegel’s recognition model. It can clearly be seen how Hegel’s model grows out of, builds on, and develops Kant’s, and what the rationale is for the differences. According to the reciprocal recognition model, one subject’s attitude of *acknowledging* responsibility makes that subject responsible only if it is suitably socially complemented by the *attributing* of responsibility by another, to whom the first attributes the authority to do so. The attitudes of acknowledging and attributing are accordingly interdependent. Each is responsible to and authoritative over the other, because only when suitably complementing each other do those attitudes institute statuses. One of the principal lessons of the discussion of the idea of pure independence, in the allegory of Mastery, is that

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the normative statuses of responsibility and authority are also in a deep sense two sides of one coin. The point is not the trivial one that if X has authority over Y then Y is responsible to X, and *vice versa*. It is that X's authority always also involves a correlative responsibility by X. Independence always involves a correlative moment of dependence, and dependence always involves a correlative moment of independence.

The interdependency (reciprocal authority and responsibility) of the attitudes of acknowledging (or claiming) and attributing normative statuses and the interdependency of the normative statuses of authority and responsibility are fundamental structures of Hegel's recognitive normative pragmatics. The argument for the metaphysical defectiveness of the idea of *pure independence* (that is, authority without responsibility) in the allegory of the Master and the Servant is, *inter alia*, Hegel's argument against the traditional subordination-obedience model of normativity. The crucial move in that argument is the claim that such a conception denies essential necessary conditions of the *determinate contentfulness* of the authority the Master claims, and indeed denies necessary conditions ultimately of the determinate contentfulness even of the attitudes of claiming the normative status of pure independence, authority without correlative responsibility. ("If whatever is going to seem right to me is right . . .") Hegel considers other forms of authority without responsibility, whose determinate contentfulness is similarly threatened, in the allegories of Stoicism and Skepticism. In these chapters of the *Self-Consciousness* section, Hegel is exploring the functional role the semantic notion of determinate conceptual content plays in his normative pragmatics. That pragmatics is characterized by the intricate interplay of normative attitudes and normative statuses that is structured by the interdependency among attitudes and the interdependency among statuses in the model according to which normative statuses are instituted by reciprocal recognitive attitudes. The complementary authority of pragmatics over semantics and responsibility of pragmatics to semantics on display in these arguments is Hegel's particular form of pragmatism about the relations between these two aspects of the theory of discursiveness.

In fact, beginning in the *Reason* section and brought to greater determinateness and explicitness in the *Spirit* chapters, it emerges that the institution of normative statuses by recognitive attitudes is only one side of the interdependence between status and attitude. The proper role of the semantic

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notion of determinate conceptual content becomes clear only once the modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses is balanced by a reached version of the traditional appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the authority of normative statuses over attributions and acknowledgments of them. The interdependence that is the fully symmetrical complementary authority of statuses over attitudes, responsibility of statuses to attitudes, authority of attitudes over statuses, and responsibility of attitudes to statuses is the framework within which the interdependency of the attitudes of attributing and acknowledging and the interdependency of the statuses of authority and responsibility both take their places. The whole comprising all three interlocking interdependencies at the level of normative pragmatic theory is the functional system within which Hegel's semantic explanation of the role of conceptual content and its representational dimension must ultimately be understood. Understanding that complex structure will require seeing how the historical recollective dimension of normativity is related to the social cognitive dimension.

The structure by which particular organic beings institute both cognitive communities and self-conscious individual selves by their reciprocal cognitive attitudes is not only the *context* in which we must understand Hegel's use of his logical terms "particular," "universal," and "individual," but also the *model* in terms of which we should understand them. The cognitive community of all those who recognize and are recognized by each other in turn is a kind of universal under which its members fall, and they count as self-conscious individuals *as* particulars characterized by that universal. Self-consciousness in Hegel's sense is practical awareness of oneself as such a cognitively constituted subject of normative statuses. It is accordingly a social achievement and a social status. Not only is it not the turning on of a Cartesian inner light; it is not even something that principally happens between the ears of the individual so constituted. This structure is not just one instance, but the paradigm of the relations between particulars, universals, and individuals. As such, it is an important point of reference wherever Hegel invokes the holistic structure of identities constituted by differences—for instance, when we look back (in the order of Hegel's exposition) to the relations of determinate properties in *Perception* and of determinate objective states of affairs in *Force and Understanding*.

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The mediation of immediacy in general is also modeled on the raising of particulars to individuals by their coming to fall under universals. Hegel puts us in a position to see judging to begin with as subjects exercising their authority to bring sensuous particulars under conceptually articulated universals. Doing that now shows up as a genus of practical doing generally. Intentional agency is assimilated to the work of shaping sensuous immediacy to make it fit under endorsed universals: making things be as one is committed to their being. The *Reason* chapter is accordingly addressed to this topic. “Reason is purposive agency.” [PG 22] The tradition Hegel inherited (endorsed by many philosophers since) understands agency in terms of a mental event of intending or willing causing a separate bodily movement, which in turn has various distinct causal consequences in the wider world. Hegel, like Donald Davidson in our own time, thinks rather of doings as unitary things (processes for him, events for Davidson), which can be variously specified. They are things *done* rather than things that just *happen*, because some of their descriptions are ones under which they are intentional. They also can be described in terms of their causal consequences, and though they might be intentional under some of those descriptions, they are never intentional under all of them.

Going beyond Davidson, Hegel understands those different kinds of description in normative terms of authority and responsibility. Further, he takes intentional and consequential specifications to correspond to normative attitudes adopted from different social perspectives. Intentional specifications are those under which the agent in a distinctive sense *acknowledges* responsibility, while consequential specifications are those under which others, in a complementary sense, *attribute* responsibility and hold the agent responsible. In adopting these socially complemented normative attitudes, which are jointly constitutive of the normative status of a doing, the agent and the community each exercises a distinctive kind of authority. What the doing is in itself is the product of what it is for the agent and what it is for others.

Judging shows up as a limiting special case of practical doings understood in this way. Essential defining features of the content of the normative status (involving both authority and responsibility) that is instituted by the right constellation of social-perspectival normative attitudes show up much more

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clearly in the general case of intentional agency, however. In particular, the *historical-recollective* dimension of the determination of conceptual content, which was first put on the table in Hegel's *Introduction*, comes to the fore in this case. As the doing reverberates through the objective world, as its consequences roll on to the horizon, new specifications of it become available. Each of them provides a new perspective on the content of the doing, on what doing it is turning out to be. That the shooting was a killing, that the insulting was a decisive breaking off of relations, that the vote was a political turning point for the party are expressions of the content of what was done that become available only retrospectively. Determining that content—what the doing really is, in itself, rather than what it is just for the agent who initiated it—is an exercise of recollective rationality. To understand the doing, one must rationally reconstruct an expressively progressive trajectory through the welter of intentional and consequential descriptions, imputing a unified implicit content that gradually emerges into explicitness as the reality partially revealed by each of its disparate appearances. It is only in the discussion of Hegel's treatment of agency that we are finally in a position to appreciate the structure of his retrospective *recollective* account of the relations between reality and appearance, noumena and phenomena, what is implicit and explicit expressions of it, representeds and representings of them, and the Hegelian analogues of Frege's central semantic concepts of reference and sense. The Hegelian expressively related versions of sense and reference that emerge at the end of the discussion of rational agency in Chapter 12 are successor semantic conceptions to Frege's, representationally related ones, transposed from the metacategorical framework of *Verstand* into Hegel's metacategorical framework of *Vernunft*.

The third and final part of this book addresses Hegel's *Spirit* chapters. This is where he pulls together the different topics he has discussed earlier in the *Phenomenology*: cognition in *Consciousness*, normativity and the social recognitive structure of self-conscious individuality in *Self-Consciousness*, and practical agency and the historical retrospective recollective imputation of intentions as norms governing the temporal evolution of actions in *Reason*. These three are now displayed as aspects of *Geist*: what the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* is a phenomenology of (and, not coincidentally, what the *Geisteswissenschaften* later became sciences of). A phenomenology is a recollective, retrospectively rationally reconstructed history that displays the

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emergence into explicitness of what becomes visible as having been all along implicit in an expressively progressive sequence of its ever more adequate appearances. The concept of *Geist* is something Hegel invented to articulate two of the guiding thoughts about Kant's founding insight into the essentially normative character of discursiveness that distinguish Hegel's own take on it. First is the idea that the authority Kantian discursive creatures have to commit themselves—to make themselves responsible by binding themselves by rules in the form of the concepts they apply in judging and acting intentionally—must be understood in the wider context of the social practices and institutions of actual communities. This idea about the essentially *social* character of normativity is developed in the model of *recognition*. The second idea is that those actual practices and institutions, and the kind of self-conscious individual subjects of normative statuses and attitudes they acculturate, have a *history*. This idea is developed in the *expressive* model of *recollection*. Hegel thinks that the most fundamental normative structure of our discursiveness underwent a revolutionary change, from its traditional form to a distinctively modern one. This vast sea change did not take place all at once, but over an extended period of time. The transformation began with the ancient Greeks and proceeded at an accelerating pace. It was still incomplete in his time (and in ours), but with the main lineaments of its full flowering just becoming visible. It is, he thought, the single biggest event in human history. "Geist" is his term for the subject of that titanic transfiguration.

The essence of the traditional form of normativity is practically treating norms as objective features of the world: as just there, as are stars, oceans, and rocks. When normativity is construed as having the asymmetric structure of relations of command and obedience that Hegel criticizes in his allegory of Mastery, the traditional conception shows up in particularly pure form in the *scala naturae*, the Great Chain of Being, which ranks all things according to their naturally founded but normatively significant relations of superiority and subordination. (In the Christian-inflected version, this natural normative order is taken to be supernaturally ordained.) In any case, there are taken to be facts about how it is fitting to behave, and it is up to us to learn to appreciate and practically acknowledge those facts (acting according to one's station and its duties). The implicit principle of traditional forms of life is the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the authority of how things ought to be over what we should strive to do.

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The founding principle of modernity is the converse idea of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. At base it is the thought that there are no normative statuses of responsibility and authority apart from our practices and practical attitudes of taking or treating each other *as* responsible and authoritative. At its most radical, it is the idea that it is those practices and attitudes that *institute* normative statuses of responsibility and authority. From this point of view the essence of the traditional conception is what Marx would later call “fetishism”: projecting what are really the products of our own social practices into the objective world, treating them as though they were there antecedently to and independently of human activities. (Marx’s paradigm is understanding the relative and absolute value of precious metals as objective properties intrinsic to them in essentially the same sense that their density is.) From Hegel’s point of view, the traditional view assimilates the normative products of social *recognition* to the attitude-independent objects of empirical *cognition*. The axis around which modernity revolves, for Hegel, is the idea that we make the norms that make us what we are. The dawn of the modern is accordingly the rise of a new kind of self-conscious subjectivity.

That modern insight into the role we play in instituting norms threatens to undercut practical and theoretical appreciation of their normative force or bindingness, however. This is what Hegel calls “alienation.” He sees it as the characteristic pathology of modern structures of normativity. If we make the norms, if they are up to us, how can we understand ourselves as genuinely bound by them? What is required to overcome alienation is practically and theoretically to balance the modern insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses with a reappropriation of the traditional insight into the status-dependence of normative attitudes. At the end of his *Spirit* chapters, Hegel tells us how he thinks that can and should be done. His account takes the form of a description of the final, fully adequate form of reciprocal recognition: the recollective recognitive structure of confession and forgiveness for which I appropriate his term “trust” [Vertrauen]. This is the culmination of the *Phenomenology*: that “one, far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves.” It is the final lesson Hegel’s book has been aiming to teach us: to understand ourselves in terms of the postmodern structure of normativity, community, and individual self-consciousness that is articulated by recognitive practices having the form of trust. In that structure, mutual recognition has the diachronic form of practical attitudes of confession and

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forgiveness. It is norm-instituting social practices of *recognition* taking the magnanimous historical form of *recollection*.

The sense in which the recognitive structure of confession and forgiveness is the “final” and “fully adequate” form of self-consciousness is that it recollectively makes explicit what was implicit in all the others considered along the way. In this sense it expresses what they were always about. In particular, it articulates what we have learned is required for the institution of genuinely binding normative statuses and the conferral on them of determinate conceptual contents. Grasping that recognitive structure theoretically (the state to which Hegel takes himself to have brought us when we have worked through his book) is the form of self-consciousness he calls “Absolute Knowing.” Hegel’s speculative metaconcepts are the medium in which that self-consciousness is expressed. Implementing that recognitive structure practically (which still largely lies ahead of us) is fulfilling those recognitive commitments, satisfying those recollective responsibilities. Doing that would be doing explicitly—that is, fully self-consciously—what has become recollectively visible as what we have all along implicitly been committed to doing: instituting binding norms and conferring determinate conceptual contents. The envisaged third phase of *Geist* is a form of life exhibiting the practical recognitive normative structure of expressive recollection: forgiveness, confession, and trust. It realizes not only a new cognitive and theoretical form of self-consciousness, but also a new magnanimous practical form of self-conscious agency. The story told in these pages accordingly concludes by describing how Hegel thinks we can combine the reachivement of the heroism of traditional agency, without its accompanying tragic subjection to fate, and the individual self-consciousness achieved by modernity, without its accompanying alienation.

Hegel’s metaconceptual story (exhibiting the structure he calls “Vernunft”), as reconstructed, expressed, and recollected here, lets us see how the *pragmatic* story about normative force and the *semantic* story about conceptual content—what is required for genuine bindingness of discursive norms and what is required for genuine determinateness of conceptual content—are two sides of one coin, two necessarily intertwined and mutually supportive aspects of one process. The core of Hegel’s idealism shows up in the form of a broadly pragmatist semantics of ordinary ground-level empirical concepts that turns on their role in practical exercises of expressive recollective rationality.

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It is, remarkably, a semantics with an edifying intent. The effect of theoretically understanding the nature of the conceptual contents we normatively bind ourselves by in our discursive activity is to be to educate and motivate us to be better people: magnanimous people, who live and move and have our being in the normative space of *Geist* in the postmodern form of trust. For Hegel's pragmatist, social-historical semantics makes explicit to us what becomes visible as our standing commitment to engage in the ideal recollective norm-instituting recognitive practices that are structured by trust—a commitment to practical magnanimity that is revealed to be implicit in talking and acting at all.

Conclusion

Semantics with an Edifying Intent: Recognition and Recollection on the Way to the Age of Trust

I. Edifying Semantics

The main task of this concluding chapter is to summarize the philosophical view I take Hegel to bring us to by the end of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, after we have been educated by traversing the path he rehearses for us. I express that view in my preferred terminology rather than his, and ignore other things he thinks that seem to me extraneous to and potentially distracting from his central philosophical contribution. Hegel has views about practically everything. But the story I have told here is focused on one central, core topic: the nature of discursive activity and the sort of conceptual contentfulness things show up as having in virtue of their involvement with that kind of activity. As I read him, everything else he addresses should be understood to stand downstream in the order of explanation from his pragmatist semantic insights.

This telling of Hegel's story revolves around three master ideas. First, on the semantic side, is a nonpsychological understanding of conceptual contentfulness in terms of *determinate negation*. Second, on the pragmatic side, is a social understanding of normativity in terms of *mutual recognition*. Third, articulating his pragmatism, is a historical understanding of the relations between conceptual content and implicitly normative discursive practices in terms of an *expressive process of recollection*. Each of these ideas

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comprises a number of subsidiary ones, and has an intricate fine structure relating them. The model of expression as recollection—the story about what one must *do* to count as thereby making explicit something that was implicit—is in many ways the keystone of the edifice. It explains the representational semantic and cognitive relation between how things appear “for consciousness” on the subjective side of thought and how things really are “in themselves” on the objective side of being. It explains the constitutive reciprocal relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses: how attitudes both institute norms and answer to them. And it explains the relations between those two stories: how normative practices bring about semantic relations. (In Hegel’s terms, explaining how cognition presupposes recognition is explaining how consciousness presupposes self-consciousness.) Conceptual idealism is a kind of pragmatism, in virtue of the way what one is practically *doing* in recollecting (producing a retrospective recollective rational reconstruction of a course of experience as expressively progressive) is the basis for an expressive semantic account of relations of representation.

Hegel thinks that once we properly understand in his recollective terms the process of experience that both determines and expresses conceptual contents, we will explicitly acknowledge practical commitments concerning how we ought to treat one another that we will see as having been implicit in our discursive activity all along. Exercising the discursive capacities to think determinate thoughts (to take the objective world to be one way rather than another) and to formulate definite intentions (commitments to make the objective world be one way rather than another) commits knowing and acting subjects to adopting definite kinds of recognitive attitudes to each other, and so to instituting a special kind of recognitive community. Heightening our specifically semantic self-consciousness is the road to practical self-improvement. Hegel’s astonishing aspiration is for a morally *edifying* semantics. The truth shall set us free, and guide us to a new age of *Geist* whose normative structure is as much an improvement over the modern as the modern was over the traditional. It is a pragmatist semantic truth: an understanding of what is required for the determinate contentfulness of concepts.

The path that leads from cognition to recognition goes through the pragmatist idea that the *content* of concepts is properly intelligible only in a larger explanatory context that includes the *use* of those concepts: the practices of

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applying them in judgment and practical agency that must also be intelligible as *instituting* the norms that govern such applications. Bimodal hylo-morphic conceptual realism understands conceptual content as coming in two forms: the subjective, deontic normative form of thoughts and the objective, alethic modal form of facts. Objective idealism asserts the reciprocal sense-dependence of those two different forms. Conceptual idealism explains the intimate relations between the two forms of conceptual content (the representational dimension of semantics) in terms of what subjects *do* in recollectively retrospectively rationally reconstructing their experience into the form of expressively progressive cumulative revelations *for consciousness* of how things really are, *in themselves*. The momentous transformation from modernity to the postmodern age of trust will take place when we give our practical, norm-instituting recognitive attitudes this magnanimous recollective shape. Recognition as recollection is forgiveness. The process and practice of recollection and the distinctive kind of rationality it embodies, which emerge from the investigation of what it means for conceptual content to be determinate, are the basis of the recognitive relations, and hence the normative structure, characteristic of the heralded, nascent third form of *Geist*.

I begin rehearsing the story that has this edifying punchline by introducing the topic of *Geist*, the sense in which it has a large-scale metaphysical history, and the idea of a recollective phenomenology rehearsing that history. As we have seen, the modern stage in the development of *Geist* suffers from the metaphysical defect he calls “alienation” [Entfremdung]. I consider four contemporary philosophical issues that are recognizably symptoms of alienation, when it is understood as I recommend. I then explain the two main claims that Hegel makes in his *Preface*. They are both focused on truth. Like most prefaces, it was written after the body of the work was completed, and so serves in many ways as *his* conclusion. The first of the core claims of the *Preface* is his account of the experience of error as the way of truth, epitomized in his memorable dictum that “truth is a vast Bacchanalian revel, with not a soul sober.” The second is the doctrine that “everything turns on grasping and expressing the True not only as Substance, but equally as Subject.” Along the way I rehearse some of the lessons we have learned about normativity, and pull together a number of threads under the heading of Hegel’s logical, metaphysical, and semantic holism.

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I close by considering more closely the morally edifying, practically uplifting lesson we are supposed to learn from the extended investigation of the relations between conceptual content and the use of concepts in cognition and intentional action. *Recollection* has emerged as the core of the pragmatist semantic story Hegel tells. The pragmatism of that story consists in the way conceptual content is understood functionally, in terms of the role it plays in implicitly norm-governed discursive practices. Hegel's normative pragmatics understands the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses according to the model of mutual recognition. When norm-instituting, content-conferring recognitive social practices are explicitly and self-consciously given the historical form of recollection, the result is a distinctive kind of recognitive community, a distinctive kind of normativity, and a distinctive kind of intentional agency relating the community, the norms, and the self-conscious individual community members who adopt those recollective recognitive practical attitudes toward one another. Recognition that includes commitment to the magnanimous recollective rationalization of norms reaches *sittlich*, unalienated practical acknowledgment of the authority of norms over attitudes, which are applications of those norms, and combines it with the acknowledgment of the authority of instituting attitudes over instituted norms that is the characteristic insight of modernity. The heroic, postmodern, magnanimous form of self-conscious intentional agency that is governed by norms instituted by the recollective recognitive attitudes of forgiveness and confession is the practical ideal projected by Hegel's semantic theory.

II. *Geist*, Modernity, and Alienation

In order to write the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Hegel had first to come up with its topic: *Geist*. There is clearly a sense in which no one had ever thought about this topic before he did. Yet it is part of his argument that everyone had been thinking about it all along. Further, he had to explain how the distinctive kind of invention and discovery, at once a making and a finding, that he was engaged in with the concept of *Geist*, is a basic feature of concept-use as such. The idea of a "phenomenology" of *Geist* is the idea that rehearsing the right sort of survey of the ways in which *Geist* has shown up

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to us (which is to itself) will reveal what it has in fact always been. Such a phenomenology is a retrospective recollective narrative that makes explicit a noumenal reality found to be already implicit in its various phenomenal appearances, which are what we have made of it, the way it has appeared to us.

Hegel's conception of *Geist* is what he makes of Kant's revolutionary insight into the fundamentally *normative* character of discursive intentionality. That is the idea (so often invoked in these pages) that what distinguishes judgments and intentional doings from the performances of merely natural creatures is that they are things their subjects are in a distinctive sense *responsible* for, as exercises of their *authority*. They express *commitments* of knowers and agents, whose *entitlement* to those commitments is always potentially at issue. Indeed, knowers and agents count as *rational* subjects just insofar as assessment of their entitlement to doxastic and practical commitments depends on the *reasons* they have for those judgments and intentions.

Hegel synthesizes Kant's normative understanding of mindedness with his reading of Enlightenment traditions of thought about the nature of normativity to yield a naturalized social account of norms. On his account, *normative* statuses are *social* statuses. He takes them to be products of the practices of those who attribute and are governed by and assessed according to those norms. In particular, he understands normative *statuses* of authority and responsibility as instituted by normative *attitudes*. The social structure of the constellation of what he calls "recognitive" attitudes determines the metaphysical structure of the resulting forms of normativity. What such a constellation of practical attitudes institutes is at once recognitive communities ("social substance") and the self-conscious individual normative selves, which are the subjects of normative statuses just insofar as they are members of such communities constituted by their attitudes. What is brought into existence in this way is what Hegel calls "Geist." *Geist* comprises all our normative doings, and everything they make possible: all the norms and recognitive attitudes and their subjects ("subjective Geist"), the practices they engage in and the communities and institutions they produce ("objective Geist"). *Geist* is us described in a normative vocabulary.

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A metaphysics of *Geist* is such a vocabulary. Hegel's preferred vocabulary for discussing things on the normative side of subjects begins by distinguishing what things are *in themselves* from what they are *for* (a) *consciousness*. I have rendered this application of the reality / appearance distinction in terms of the distinction between normative *statuses* and normative *attitudes*. The two principal normative statuses for Hegel are *independence* and *dependence*. I have rendered these as *authority* and *responsibility*. The two principal normative attitudes for Hegel are what something is *for itself*, and what it is *for another*. I have rendered this basic distinction of social perspective as that between *acknowledging* a commitment (responsibility), or claiming authority for oneself, and *attributing* responsibility or authority to another. The subjects of these normative statuses and attitudes are individual self-conscious selves, who are *particular* desiring biological creatures, who become self-conscious *individual* selves in virtue of being members of a recognitive community—that is, falling under a Hegelian *universal*. (In general, as Hegel uses these logical terms, individuals are particulars as characterized by universals.) All the terms structuring the metaphysical vocabulary Hegel uses to discuss *Geist*, on the side of knowing and acting subjects—"in itself" / "for consciousness," "independence" / "dependence," and "particular" / "universal" / "individual"—have corresponding uses on the objective side of natural objects known and acted upon. That this is so is an essential element of Hegel's idealism. How and why the concepts articulating the metaphysics of normativity also apply to objective nature is what that idealism proposes to teach us.

In spite of these basic metaphysical concepts being amphibious between the subjective and objective poles of the intentional nexus, one of Hegel's most basic claims is that normative, *geistig* things are structurally different from natural ones. For they have *histories* rather than *natures*. To say that something has a history in this special sense is to say that it is subject to a special kind of self-constitutive developmental process. It doesn't just *change*, it *changes itself*. The paradigmatic case is individual selves, the subjects of normative statuses and attitudes. As such subjects, they are not only something *in themselves* (their normative statuses); they are something *for themselves* (their normative attitudes). The normative attitudes are the commitments (responsibilities) and entitlements (authority)—that is, the normative statuses—

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they in practice *take* (acknowledge or claim) themselves to have. As having such attitudes, individual normative subjects are *self-conscious*, just in the sense of being something *for* themselves.

One of Hegel's big ideas is that what self-conscious subjects are *in* themselves essentially depends on what they are *for* themselves. For he takes it that normative statuses are instituted by normative attitudes of reciprocal recognition. Such statuses, what one is *in* oneself, are the product of what one is *for* others and what one is *for* oneself—what one is recognized as by those one recognizes. And what one is *for* *them* depends on what one is *for* *oneself*. Paradigmatically, what one is held responsible for depends on what responsibilities one acknowledges. So any subject's statuses depend on its attitudes: what others are for it (whom it recognizes) and what it is for itself. It by no means follows that a subject simply is whatever it takes itself to be. The recognitive metaphysics of normativity is a social metaphysics. The recognitive attitudes of others make just as important and essential a contribution to constituting normative statuses as the subject's own recognitive attitudes: the statuses it attributes to itself and to others.

Because subjects of normative statuses are essentially self-conscious in the sense that what they are *in* themselves depends upon what they are *for* themselves, they are subjects of a distinctive kind of self-constitutive developmental process. For if their attitudes change, so do their statuses. Changing what they are *for* themselves (or, indeed, what others are for them, the commitments and entitlements they attribute as well as those they acknowledge or claim—for instance, whom they recognize) can change what they are *in* themselves. That change in what they are in themselves, their statuses, can produce in turn a change in what they are for themselves or for others—resulting in a further change in what they are in themselves. *Geistig* items, which are what they are as the ever-changing products of such a cascade of interdigitated changes of attitude and status, can be understood only *historically*—that is, by recounting a narrative recollecting or reconstructing the history of their development. To understand them, one must tell a story about how they got to be what they are.

This is true not only of essentially self-conscious individual selves, who are subjects of normative attitudes and statuses. This historical character is inherited by other *geistig* items. Particular electrons and animals, as natural, can have *pasts*. This individual electron was bound first in this atom, then in

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that one. This individual animal first flourished in that environment, and then struggled in this one. But the *concepts* electron and species, as normative, *geistig* things, have *histories*. For the contents of those concepts, what they are in themselves, depends on the practical attitudes manifested in actual applications of those concepts—what they are for their users. As the applications change, so too do the contents expressed. Those conceptual contents determine what one has endorsed, committed oneself to, or made oneself responsible for in judging. They are what one has invested one's cognitive authority in. They determine the normative statuses one acknowledges or attributes in using or applying those concepts—that is, in adopting the discursive attitudes that both shape and reveal (make and find) those contents.

It is a consequence of the fact that all of its components are in this sense historical entities that the whole constellation of normative subjects and their attitudes, statuses, practices, communities, and institutions that is *Geist* must itself have a history. One of Hegel's master ideas is that in addition to what follows from the historicity of the smaller normative items it comprises, the structure of *Geist* as a whole undergoes large-scale historical transformations. In particular, he thinks that the biggest, most momentous event in human history—simply the single most important thing that ever happened to us—is a vast change in the most basic structure of normativity. This is the transition from the traditional form of *Geist* to its modern form. This titanic sea change affects every aspect of the normative realm: the self-conscious normative selves or subjects themselves, the norms they are governed by (both in the sense of being guided by and in the sense of being assessed according to), their understanding of and attitudes toward those norms, and the practices, institutions, and communities articulated by those norms. All the canonical philosophers from Descartes through Kant were centrally engaged in developing the modern understanding of discursive normativity in its theoretical and practical forms. But Hegel was the first to take modernity in all its multifarious aspects—intellectual, political, economic, institutional, and psychological—as a single phenomenon, a single topic of research. What unifies it, on his account, is the way the structure of normativity it articulates differs from the traditional structure of normativity out of which it developed. The concept of *Geist* is in no small part delineated for Hegel by this contrast between traditional and modern structures normativity can take and has taken.

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The traditional conception of *Geist* understands norms as objective in much the same sense that the natural world is objective. Normative statuses, paradigmatically the authority of the superior to command and the responsibility of the subordinate to obey, are a feature of how things simply are—just part of the furniture of the world. The most basic metaphysical structure of that world is epitomized by the *scala naturae*, the Great Chain of Being, stretching from God, through the celestial hierarchy of his thrones and dominions, down through emperors, kings, and lords, to people of various ignoble stations, animals, and inorganic nature. It orders all things by those normative relations of subordination. The “fitnesses” of things, how it is appropriate that they be, what they ought to be, are built into how things in fact are. Those who cannot see those appropriatenesses are barbarians—or simply not properly brought up. Normative proprieties, no less than natural properties, are found, not made. We may make some laws. But the warrants for those laws, what makes them binding on us, are to be found outside of us, in the nature of things. Our task is properly to acknowledge their authority, by conforming our practical attitudes to those antecedently existing objective norms. We are made what we are, as *geistig*, normative beings, by the norms (the normative statuses) by which we are governed and assessed.

The modern conception of *Geist* understands norms as subjective products of our activities and attitudes. The subjective normative realm is sharply distinguished from the objective natural realm. The Enlightenment had the idea that there were no normative statuses of authority and responsibility (superiority and subordination) in the objective world, before we started practically taking or treating each other *as* authoritative or responsible (superior and subordinate). Norms are not found, but made. Indeed, they are instituted by our practical attitudes. Social contract theories of political obligation are paradigmatic of this Enlightenment line of thought. Obligations are understood as brought about by social normative attitudes such as promising, agreeing, or contracting. Normative significances are like cloaks thrown over natural things (“imputed” to them) by the role they play in our practices of praising and blaming, holding each other responsible, treating each other as having authority or being responsible. The discovery at the core of modernity is the realization that we are self-made creatures. The norms that make us the *geistig* beings we are, are our own products. From the modern

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point of view, when thinking traditionally we *fetishized* norms, in the technical sense of the term Marx introduced to express this Hegelian idea. We treated what in fact were the products of our own activities as though they were objective things independent of us.

The modern realization of the constitutive role of our attitudes in instituting norms is a new, deeper form of self-consciousness. It is consciousness of ourselves as *essentially* self-conscious, so that what we are *in* ourselves (our normative statuses) essentially depends on what we are *for* ourselves (our normative attitudes toward ourselves and each other). Hegel takes it that this insight *is* a realization: the appreciation of something that always was true of us, without us knowing it. So it is learning something about normative selfhood. But because we *are* in fact essentially self-conscious beings, this change in what we moderns are *for* ourselves, our attitudes, changes also what we are *in* ourselves—the kind of normative beings we are. The structure of normativity itself changes when we become self-conscious in this sense characteristic of modernity. The kind of authority we exercise, the sort of responsibilities we undertake and attribute, our normative practices, institutions, and communities all change with this change in self-conception. (Again, that is not to say that they all automatically become just whatever we take them to be.) That change is the cataclysmic advent of modernity.

Expressed in the most general terms articulating Hegel's metaphysics of normativity, the structural transformation defining the progressive move from traditional to modern *Geist* is that from appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes to appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. In the traditional structure of *Geist*, the norms are independent, in the sense of authoritative. Our normative attitudes, what we *take* to be correct or appropriate, who we treat as authoritative or responsible, are responsible to the independent (authoritative) norms, which set standards for assessing those attitudes. In the modern structure of *Geist*, our attitudes are independent, in the sense of exercising authority over normative statuses. They *institute* statuses of authority and responsibility.

The issue that distinguishes the premodern and modern structures of normativity is the relative normative and explanatory priority of norms (normative statuses) and normative attitudes. Are there norms that are objective in the sense of being attitude-independent? The tradition says yes, and modernity says no. Does the bindingness of norms come first, or the subjects'

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attitudes of acknowledging and attributing that bindingness? Is the normative force of statuses such as authority and responsibility conditioned on the attitudes of those who attribute or possess such statuses? The principal dimension of priority here is normative: the status-dependence of attitudes and the attitude-dependence of statuses is a question of the *authority* of the one over the other. But these normative relationships entail explanatory ones, too. In the traditional structure of *Geist*, there is a normative pressure pushing attitudes to conform to norms because individual normative subjects are liable to criticism insofar as their attitudes do not conform to the objective norms. In the modern structure of *Geist*, claims about what the norms are can be justified only by appeal to the attitudes that acknowledge or attribute them.

Hegel regards the transition to modern forms of *Geist* as expressively progressive. Something important about what *Geist* always was implicitly or in itself becomes explicit for it with modern self-consciousness. Normative statuses really are attitude-dependent. The Enlightenment is quite right that apart from practical attitudes of attributing and acknowledging them, there are no normative statuses of responsibility and authority. In failing to understand that, traditional *Geist* was opaque to itself in ways that modern *Geist* is not. This is a defect in the normative self-consciousness native to *Geist* with that premodern structure, and hence to the normative selves that are what they are in virtue of being governed by norms with that practical structure.

But the modern form of *Geist* is also defective. Its defect is the mirror image of the defect of the traditional form of *Geist*. For each has seized *one-sidedly* on just *one* of two complementary aspects of the metaphysics of normativity, making no room for appreciation of the other. The premodern understanding of normativity holds fast to the status-dependence of normative attitudes, ignoring the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. The modern understanding of normativity holds fast to the attitude-dependence of normative statuses, ignoring the status-dependence of normative attitudes. In fact, according to Hegel's metaphysics of normativity, the dependence relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses are reciprocal. Each exercises a distinctive kind of authority over the other, and each is accordingly responsible to the other in a distinctive way. A proper understanding requires appreciating *both* the sense in which statuses are respon-

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sible to attitudes (as the moderns do) *and* the sense in which attitudes are responsible to statuses (as the tradition does).

The failure of modern normative self-consciousness to appreciate the status-dependence of normative attitudes Hegel calls “alienation” [Entfremdung]. In the distinctively modern form of *Geist*, he thinks, realizing the attitude-dependence of normative statuses is incompatible with treating normative statuses as exercising authority over normative attitudes. The authority of norms over attitudes is undercut. The norms cannot be understood as genuinely *binding* on the practical attitudes of normative subjects, including those expressed in intentional actions. The cost of appreciating the authority of attitudes over statuses is to lose sight of the complementary responsibility of attitudes to statuses. This is the bindingness or validity (Kant’s “Verbindlichkeit,” “Gültigkeit”) of norms. Practically acknowledging the authority of norms over attitudes is what Hegel calls “Sittlichkeit.” It is what the traditional premodern form of *Geist* got right. Hegel thinks that when we realized that we are responsible *for* our norms, we lost sight of the crucial sense in which we are also responsible *to* them. The good insight that our attitudes institute the norms is stretched inappropriately into the idea that there are only attitudes, which answer to nothing outside those attitudes. Modern *Geist* is not *sittlich*, but alienated.

The ultimate theoretical challenge is to formulate a metaphysics of normativity that overcomes the one-sidedness that both the traditional and the modern forms of *Geist* exhibit. This is to do justice at once to the *sittlich* appreciation of the authority of norms over attitudes and to the self-conscious appreciation of the authority of attitudes over norms. Retaining the advance in self-consciousness of modernity while overcoming its alienation would usher in a new, self-conscious *sittlich* structure of *Geist*—a third phase in human history. This is what I call the “age of trust,” after the final form of reciprocal recognition that structures it.

The key to a metaphysics of normativity that adequately appreciates the reciprocal relations of authority and responsibility between norms and normative attitudes—acknowledging both the status-dependence of attitudes and the attitude-dependence of statuses—is to be found in understanding what is required for both normative statuses and normative attitudes to be *determinately contentful*. That is, it lies in understanding the relations between a normative *pragmatics* and a *semantics* that explains the concept of

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determinate conceptual content. At the center of Hegel's account lies the process of *experience* [Erfahrung] that is at once the *application* and the *institution* of determinately contentful conceptual norms. This process of *determining* the conceptual norms is structured by normative relations of authority and responsibility that have the historical recognitive structure of a *tradition*. If conceptual contents are understood as determinate in the sense of the tradition Kant inherited (and Frege continued), according to meta-concepts exhibiting the structure Hegel calls "Verstand," the reciprocity of authority and responsibility that relate norms and attitudes is unintelligible. The attitude-dependence of normative statuses can be made sense of only at the cost of alienation: being unable to make sense of the *sittlich* status-dependence of normative attitudes. What is needed is Hegel's new understanding of the determinateness of conceptual contents, according to metaconcepts exhibiting the structure he calls "Vernunft." The notion of determinate conceptual content is to be understood in broadly functional terms—that is, in terms of the role such contents play in the interplay of normative attitudes and normative statuses in the process of experience. Hegel's semantics arises as a chapter in his normative pragmatic story. In this sense, he offers a *pragmatist* account of the relation between pragmatics and semantics. The overall aim of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as I understand it, is to introduce the constellation of metaconcepts *Vernunft* comprises, and to deploy them to explain both the process of experience structured by reciprocal relations of authority and responsibility relating normative statuses and normative attitudes and how the conceptual contents applied by adopting those statuses and attitudes are determined by the very same experiential process that is their application.

III. Some Contemporary Expressions of Alienation in Philosophical Theories

Before rehearsing how we are to understand the relations between norms, normative attitudes, and conceptual contents in the heralded third, post-modern phase of *Geist*—the age of trust—it will be helpful to consider in further detail the modern phenomenon of alienation that must be overcome to achieve that ideal of *sittlich* subjective self-consciousness. Hegel sees alien-

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ation as inextricably woven into the metaphysics of normativity characteristic of modernity, deforming our actual norms and attitudes (what they are in themselves) by deforming our understanding of them (what they are for us). If he is right, then alienation should be manifestly pervasive in our contemporary philosophical understanding of normativity, once he has opened our eyes to see it. Is it?

I want to point to some familiar lines of thought that offer evidence for Hegel's diagnosis, two centuries on. The first and most obvious is moral or ethical relativism. Next, we can look to the principal twentieth-century philosopher who rediscovered Kant's revolutionary insight into the fundamentally normative character of intentionality, and placed that discovery at the center of his problematic: the later Wittgenstein. From the point of view of what we have made of Hegel's notion of alienation, it is interesting to consider both the skeptical semantic worry Kripke extracts from Wittgenstein in his book on rule following and a more general characterization of the later Wittgenstein's largest philosophical concerns. A further test case is what contemporary jurisprudential theory finds puzzling about the institution of legal norms in the case of "judge-made law"—turning on its head the example I have appealed to at various places in this work in articulating Hegel's positive view. Finally, reductive naturalism, which evidently is a pervasive party in contemporary philosophical debates, shows up as a paradigmatic form of Hegelian alienation, when we understand the latter as suggested here. Other candidate illustrations abound, but perhaps these suffice to make the point that the large-scale philosophical tendencies and temptations Hegel takes to be pathological symptoms of modernity are still alive and abroad in the land. If and insofar as they are characteristic of our time, we ought to be all the more interested in the details of his diagnosis, and the shape of the theoretical and practical therapy that he recommends.

In the broad terms I have used to characterize it here, alienation is what happens when appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses makes theoretically and practically unintelligible the status-dependence of normative attitudes—that is, the *sittlich* appreciation of the genuine *bindingness* of norms, their authority. Metaethical moral relativism is a relatively straightforward, explicit version of this phenomenon. For what moral norms are taken to be relative *to* is moral normative attitudes. This idea first becomes tempting with an anthropological understanding of the cultural diversity of

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normative attitudes as expressed in the various practices, traditions, institutions, and avowed beliefs of different groups. There evidently are substantial differences in what people practically *take* to be appropriate and inappropriate, obligatory and permitted. Whether or not this diversity of attitudes is treated as disagreement, the thought is not far off that there might be no fact of the matter determining one of these conflicting constellations of practical attitudes as correct. In particular, insofar as one thinks that moral normative statuses (what really is right or wrong) do not swing free of normative attitudes (in one expressivist tradition thought of as “sentiments”) of praise or blame, approval or disapproval—that is, insofar as one appreciates the attitude-dependence of those norms or normative statuses—the systematic variation of attitudes with cultural circumstances undercuts the validity claims of any particular one. While metaethical moral relativism is by no means a consensus view among contemporary theorists of this dimension of normativity (though it has a number of distinguished proponents), its popularity and easy accessibility will be attested to by anyone who has taught undergraduate introductory surveys of moral theory. In this population, at least, as a matter of sociological fact it seems to be contested principally by those whose religious convictions lead them to premodern rejection of any form of attitude-dependence of moral norms.

Relativist skepticism about moral norms as a response to observed variations in moral normative attitudes is an obvious expression of Hegelian alienation. That the skeptical arguments about semantic norms that Kripke attributes to Wittgenstein are also expressions of alienation in Hegel’s sense is much less clear. But in fact Kripke’s Wittgenstein’s argument essentially consists in the confrontation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes with the attitude-dependence of normative statuses, drawing the conclusion that the latter makes the former unintelligible.

Kripke begins with what is in fact a Kantian insight: applying a concept has *normative* consequences.¹ Meaning plus by “+” includes undertaking *commitments* as to how it would be correct to apply the expression in cases beyond those in which I actually apply it. In the language I have been using to articulate Hegel’s views, adopting a determinately contentful *attitude*—for instance, acquiring a belief or forming an intention—is undertaking (or attributing) a normative *status*. The commitment undertaken, the status acquired by using the expression, is significant for assessments of the *correct-*

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ness of future applications. That status is a commitment or responsibility that one undertakes. Having such a status is subjecting oneself to a norm, in the sense of making oneself liable to assessments of the correctness of one's attitudes, according to the standard set by the norm. The *content* of the normative status (here, belief or intention) determines *what* norm one makes oneself liable to by acquiring that status, by adopting an attitude that is the undertaking of that status. The content of the commitment (e.g., the concept plus) is the standard according to which attitudes expressed using "+" are to be assessed. In other words, the determinate contentfulness of normative attitudes is intelligible only in terms of the authority that normative statuses (the commitments one undertakes in expressing a belief or forming an intention using "+") have over those attitudes. This is the status-dependence of normative attitudes. The observation that sets the stage for Kripke's Wittgenstein's argument is that the determinate contentfulness of normative attitudes is intelligible only insofar as those attitudes are understood as responsible to norms—that is, only insofar as normative statuses, in the form of the commitments one undertakes by believing or intending, are authoritative with respect to assessments of the correctness or success of the attitudes in question.

The second step in setting up the skeptical argument directed against the criterion of adequacy of making sense of the status-dependence of normative attitudes then appeals to the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. We can ask: What is the source of the norms that set standards for assessments of correctness of the attitudes that are applications of concepts such as plus? Kripke's Wittgenstein's second claim is that only the *use* of the expression can confer that content on it. *All* there is to determine the content of the concept applied, and so the norm that governs applications of it (in the sense of providing a standard of normative assessments of correctness for those applications) is the way it has been applied, the attitudes that have in fact been adopted. So the question becomes: What fact is it about the use of the expression "+" in virtue of which it means plus? The use of the expression consists in adopting attitudes expressed by means of it: undertaking and attributing commitments, whether theoretical, in the form of beliefs, or practical, in the form of intentions. So the challenge becomes explaining how the adoption of a sequence of prior attitudes can determine a norm governing which possible future applications would be correct. How are we to understand

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those attitudes as exercising the appropriate authority to institute determinately contentful normative statuses—the attitude-dependence of those statuses?

The third move in the argument is then the claim that there is no way to explain how any course of past actual applications of a concept can determine a normative standard for assessing the correctness of novel possible future uses. How is such a passage from an “is” to an “ought” to be justified? Past usage consists of a finite number of candidate cases where the term was in fact applied, and a finite number of candidate cases where its application was withheld. How is that supposed to determine how it would be *correct* to apply (or withhold application of) the concept in an infinite number of future cases? What gives those past applications binding normative force over future ones? Here, though tempting, it is no help to appeal not only to *actual* applications, but to *dispositions* to apply the concept. For such dispositions will not underwrite a notion of mistaken application robust enough to make sense of the idea that one might be disposed to make mistakes. As Wittgenstein says, if whatever seems right to me is right, then there can be no question of right or wrong. [*PI* §258] Further, even if we can tell a story about the origin of normative force in nonnormative matters of fact—the attitudes that have actually been adopted—and so justify a transition from “is” to “ought,” the question will still remain: *which* ought, which determinately contentful norm, of all the ones *compatible with* the actual prior applications, should be taken to be instituted thereby? For there are *many* ways to “go on in the same way” as the prior applications, and for any of them a story can be told about why it is the right one. And it seems that appealing to definitional or inferential connections to other concepts—defining addition in terms of counting, plus in terms of successor—merely puts off the issue, because the same sort of question can be raised about the institution or the determinate contents of *those* conceptual norms by prior applications of them.

The conclusion is that if we accept that all there is to institute a conceptual norm is prior uses of the concept (and perhaps the use of related concepts, for which the same issue arises), then it is hard to see how such uses can institute a norm that is sufficiently determinate to serve as a standard of correctness for an indefinite number of further possible uses. That is, accepting the attitude-dependence of normative statuses seems to rule out the authority of those attitude-instituted norms over further attitudes: the

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status-dependence (norm-governedness or responsibility to a norm) of normative attitudes. In gesturing at the familiar argument of Kripke's Wittgenstein, I am ignoring a host of subtleties, because I am after only one conclusion: the argument is a paradigm case of the alienation Hegel diagnoses as the worm in the apple of modernity. It is a particularly important contemporary philosophical manifestation of that alienation, because it directly addresses the issue of how to understand determinately contentful conceptual norms, and it is one of the master ideas of the reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology* that I have been offering here that this topic is at the core of the book. It is part of that claim that in 1806 Hegel already foresaw the problem that Kripke's Wittgenstein raises. It is accordingly a principal criterion of adequacy of the account I attribute to him of how to overcome alienation and reconcile a *sittlich* appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes with a modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses that it provide a pointed and powerful response to Kripke's Wittgenstein's skeptical semantic challenge. The account Hegel offers splits the difference between what Kripke calls "straight" and "skeptical" solutions to the problem. It is like the straight solutions in that it explains what is required for claims about what someone means and what the determinate content of their normative statuses and attitudes is to be *true*. It is like the skeptical solutions in that it agrees that the dilemma posed by the apparent conflict between the status-dependence of discursive normative attitudes and the attitude-dependence of discursive norms cannot be resolved in terms articulated according to the traditional modern philosophical metaconcepts of *Verstand*, but only if we shift to thinking about truth and determinateness according to the philosophical metaconcepts of *Vernunft*. In any case, insofar as Hegel's counts for this reason as a skeptical response, it is a *very* different one from the proposal Kripke attributes to Wittgenstein, of replacing talk of truth conditions with talk of assertibility conditions.

I think there are good and sufficient reasons to doubt that Wittgenstein endorses the response Kripke suggests for him. And though Wittgenstein points out many of the raw materials Hegel deploys in his account, I do not think he does or would endorse the detailed, theoretically ambitious, constructive recollective metaphysics of normativity Hegel develops by assembling and processing them as he does. But at the level of abstraction at which I have described it, using the terms I propose for understanding Hegel's, I

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think Kripke is right to see Wittgenstein in effect as centrally concerned with the difficulty of reconciling commitment to the status-dependence of discursive normative attitudes with commitment to the attitude-dependence of discursive normative statuses. And I take it that, like Hegel, Wittgenstein thinks it is absolutely essential to appreciate both of these apparently incompatible but actually complementary aspects of discursive social practices.

Wittgenstein clearly did—as far as can be told, independently—recover the Kantian insight into the fundamentally normative character of intentionality. He understands that being in an intentional state, such as having a belief or an intention, includes having a kind of normative status. For it involves *committing* oneself as to how things are or are to be. In believing or intending one essentially makes oneself liable to normative assessments of the correctness of the belief or the success of the intention. And he is interested in a certain kind of puzzlement we might have about the nature of that normative significance. How are we to understand the way intentional states, as it were, reach out to various possible states of affairs and sort them into those that are and those that are not in accord with the content of the state?

Someone says to me: “Show the children a game.” I teach them gambling with dice, and the other says “I didn’t mean that sort of game.” Must the exclusion of the game with dice have come before his mind when he gave me the order? [*PI* §70]

The thought is that the retrospective claim about what was meant, intended, ordered, or requested is quite correct: he did *not* mean that kind of game. But what, exactly, does that fact consist in? We might find ourselves puzzled about this normative significance, as about how a signpost (“considered just as a piece of wood”) can show us the right way to go.

This question is the first move that sets up the problematic of Kripke’s Wittgenstein. But Wittgenstein has concerns broader than those that show up there—concerns that also articulate the alienation characteristic of the modern metaphysics of normativity. Wittgenstein’s preoccupation with processes and practices of *learning* language games is often remarked upon. Less often noticed, but at least equally central to his thought are the processes and practices of *extending* a familiar language game to a novel one. Indeed, it is not too strong to say that he takes the way in which an extended lan-

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guage game can grow out of a more restricted one to be the most central and essential discursive phenomenon. It is for this reason, I think, that he is pessimistic about the prospects for systematic semantic theorizing about language—the project of associating meanings with expressions in such a way that even the most basic proprieties of their use could be systematically computed from those meanings. For even if one could achieve such a codification, it would hold at most for a brief time slice of the evolving and developing language, liable to falsification by the next transformative extension. It is because it is at every stage the product of a multifarious process of organic growth that language is at every stage in its development a “motley”—a messy, unsurveyable assemblage of suburbs that have grown out of adjoining regions without a central downtown.²

It seems to be the *contingency* of the budding and sprouting course of development of discursive practices that matters most to Wittgenstein. What developments of a practice take place depends to begin with on what extensions practitioners can catch on to, so that they practically agree about “how to go on” in new cases. These can turn on quirks of embodiment, large and small. (“If a lion could talk, we could not understand him.”³) But what extensions are in this sense practically possible for a community can also depend on the details of the forms of life they already share and can learn and teach each other to project to new situations. Whether a particular local projection of one practice into another that people *could* learn actually takes place also depends on which among all the practically possible candidates in fact arise, and which of those happen to catch on in the community. The observation motivating this line of thought is that if any of these contingent matters of fact *had* been different, the contents of our concepts, and hence the norms we bind ourselves to by using them in thought and judgment, *would* be different. But the occurrence of those contingencies does not provide *reasons* that *justify* talking as we do rather than some other way. “In” means something different, is governed by different norms, because we could and did extend our purely spatial use from applying to gold in teeth to applying also to pain in teeth. One lesson illustrated and reinforced by many of Wittgenstein’s anecdotes is that the matters of fact (of quite various kinds) on which the boundaries of the norms that govern various expressions are subjunctively and counterfactually dependent, are *contingent* in the sense that they could have been different—some

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features of our embodiment and the history of our practices more easily, and others less easily.

A foreseeable consequence of appreciating these contingencies conditioning our practices is a delegitimizing of the norms whose contingency has been revealed. This undercutting of the rational bindingness of the norms is alienation in Hegel's sense. A familiar example of this general phenomenon happens when a young one realizes that the religious commitments she has always taken for granted are as they are because of the community she was born into—that she is a Baptist because her parents and everyone they know are Baptists, and that had they all instead been Unitarians, Buddhists, or Muslims, she would have been, too. Realizing the contingencies on which her commitments are counterfactually dependent has the effect of bringing into question their justification, and so their normative force. What is the warrant for taking seriously the claim of those norms, for practically treating them as binding, once the accidental character of the standard for assessment they provide has been revealed? Pointing to the radical contingencies that our conceptual norms are subjunctively dependent upon poses a threat to our understanding of those norms as *rationally binding* on us. The challenge is to see why, if the norms are to this extent and in this way our products, they can nonetheless be understood to be binding on us, to be *correctly* used this way and not that. How can conceptual norms provide us with *reasons* to apply them one way rather than another, given their counterfactual dependence on contingencies that do *not* provide reasons for the *contents* of those norms to be as they are, rather than some other way?

The legitimation problem is not just that there are true counterfactuals to the effect that if some contingent fact had been different, the content of the norm in question would have been different. It is that those counterfactuals codify the dependence of the attitude of, for instance, *believing* (acknowledging or undertaking a doxastic commitment) on the occurrence of events that do not provide reasons or evidence justifying the content *believed*. That the believer was born into a Baptist community is not evidence for the truth of predestination. This is the structure that underlies the delegitimizing force of genealogical explanations generally. The great unmaskers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, all told stories of this shape. If one's approval of treating labor as a commodity is due

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to one's bourgeois upbringing, if one's Christian humility is the result of *resentiment*, if one's authoritarianism should be understood as stemming from unresolved conflicts left over from the Family Romance, then the justifiability and hence the normative force, the authority, of those commitments is challenged. For being raised in bourgeois circumstances is not evidence for the justice of labor markets, being riven with *ressentiment* does not provide reasons for esteeming humility, and Oedipal rivalry with one's father does not justify the contents of authoritarian attitudes. Genealogies point to causes of attitudes that are contingent relative to the norms articulating the contents of the concepts, showing them to be as they are because of those contingencies, in the sense that these conditions and the occurrence of these events do not provide *reasons* for applying the concepts one way rather than another. They do not provide *evidence* that could be appealed to in *justifying* the application or withholding of the application of the concept in particular cases.

Exhibiting these sorts of *causes* for attitudes undercuts the *sittlich* claim of those attitudes to be responsive and responsible to the authority of *reasons* provided by the norms those attitudes acknowledge. In the cases to the fore for Wittgenstein, the contingent fact that we *did* extend our practice of spatially locating some things *in* others to include treating pains as in body parts, and did *not* extend it to treating sounds as in bells explains why we *say* the ache is in the tooth and not that the peal is in the bell, but it does not *justify*, does not offer evidence or reasons for the claims that pains are in body parts and sounds are not in bells. That as a matter of contingent fact we can catch on to an extension of prior practice, that we can all learn to agree in practice about "how to go on" to apply it in new cases, is not a *reason* to go on that way. "We just talk that way," is an observation about our practices that is not at the right level to serve as a justification for claims about the world to the effect that one thing is to be found in another—any more than offering a historical explanation of why we use the sign designs "dog" (written and spoken) to refer to dogs, instead of some other arbitrary marks and noises, justifies the claim that Lassie is a dog.

I think Wittgenstein's thought in this area begins with appreciation of the contingency of important aspects of our discursive practices. We inherit ways of using expressions that both are essential to their meaning what they do and show on their surfaces the marks of the contingencies that have

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shaped them. We find ourselves always already “thrown into” such a situation, and have no choice but to conduct our practical and theoretical discursive affairs against that in many ways arbitrary background. Adapting a Heideggerian term, this fact might be called “semantic *Geworfenheit*.” I think Wittgenstein both thinks that semantic *Geworfenheit* threatens our sense of the norms our discursive practices institute as rationally binding on us, in the sense of providing genuine *reasons* for applying expressions the way we do in novel cases (that is, that it is alienating), and that he diagnoses this threat as resulting from a residual misunderstanding of the discursive norms that articulate what is a reason for what.⁴ In particular, I think he objects to the way of thinking about the division of labor between *instituting* discursive norms and *applying* them that is implicit in seeing semantic *Geworfenheit* as threatening the intelligibility of understanding those discursive norms as governing our practice, in the sense of exercising authority that is genuinely binding on (sets a standard of correctness for assessments of) future uses. The use of expressions, applying them in some circumstances and withholding application in others, is all there is to institute the norms that govern such applications. The contingencies that turn out to be inherent in our adoption of normative attitudes are essential to their having the determinate contents they do. Any picture of discursive norms as answering to norms that are rational in a sense that excludes genealogical contingencies is an idealized fantasy, visible as such by its precluding the determinate contentfulness of those norms.

I take it that Wittgenstein is concerned both to point out our semantic *Geworfenheit* and to show that it ought not to be understood as impugning the integrity of discursive norms, because it is essential to their determinate contentfulness. If we are to talk at all, we have no choice but to do so by engaging in practices whose implicit norms are as they are as a result of contingent facts that don’t *justify* talking as we do. (As to the alternative, recall Sellars’s dictum “Clearly human beings could dispense with all discourse, though only at the expense of having nothing to say.”⁵) Any account of discursive normativity that treats the fact of our semantic *Geworfenheit* as undercutting the legitimacy of those norms (that is, any alienating account), is to be rejected as incorporating an evidently mistaken metaphysics of normativity. The proper response to this realization, Wittgenstein thinks, is not to construct some alternative positive metaphysical story, but simply to

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acknowledge and embrace discursive contingency and semantic *Geworfenheit*. We might call this recommended therapeutic meta-attitude “semantic *Gelassenheit*,” to continue the Heideggerian metaphor. (Though so used, the term owes more to Meister Eckhart’s original usage than to Heidegger’s radical adaptation of it.) Basically, it recommends that we just get used to our *Geworfenheit*, rejecting theories according to which it is alienating, without adopting others in their stead.

According to this line of thought, the culprit responsible for the threat of alienation from the discursive norms that make our thought possible is out-moded metaphysical pictures of what would be required to justify those norms, to show them to be genuinely binding on us, to provide suitable standards for assessing the correctness of our attitudes. Rather than holding our practice up to Procrustean standards provided by *a priori* models of what rationality must be like—requiring, for instance, that reasons have the form of deductive derivations from noncontingent premises, or that they maximize utility in the light of subjective preferences and credences—we should accept that our discursive practices are in general in order as they are, and understand justification in terms of those semantogenic practices. So understood, the recommended *Gelassenheit* is a kind of pragmatism, in the sense of investing authority in our reason-giving practices, and taking our theories to be responsible to them, rather than the other way around.

Hegel anticipated Wittgenstein’s social-practical understanding of discursive normativity. That is how he brings Kant’s insight into the normativity of intentionality down to earth—in a suitably broad sense *naturalizing* it. And he foresaw the danger that appreciation of our normative semantic *Geworfenheit* poses for the intelligibility of discursive norms as genuinely binding on the attitudes of those who engage in practices of applying those norms. I have been claiming that that is the core of his concept of alienation: that the modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses (a matter of how discursive norms are instituted) undercuts the traditional *sittlich* practical appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes (a matter of how discursive norms are applied). Hegel, too, rejects the conclusion that there is an ineluctable incompatibility here, and so rejects any and every metaphysics of discursive normativity that entails such an incompatibility. For him, these are accounts that operate with the concepts construed according to the categories of *Verstand*, which Kant brought to

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explicit flowering. One diagnosis he offers is that in Kant's hands the distinction between reasons and causes (articulating the overarching distinction between the normative and the natural) has been regimented and rigidified into a dualism. (As I am using the term, a distinction becomes a dualism when it is drawn in terms that make the relations between the distinguished items unintelligible.) In particular, it is of the first importance to Hegel that the contingent causes on which genealogical analyses show our discursive norms to be counterfactually conditioned are themselves features of prior applications of concepts. In striking contrast to Wittgenstein's version of normative semantic *Gelassenheit* as theoretical quietism, Hegel offers a detailed systematic account of the process by which and in which actual, and therefore contingent, applications of concepts both institute norms governing such applications and acknowledge the authority of those norms.

This is the process Hegel discusses in the *Introduction* as the experience of error and in the *Preface* as the truth-process ("A vast, Bacchanalian revel with not a soul sober."). It is the process, he says, of giving contingency the form of necessity—that is, normative form. It is the process of determining the contents of concepts, as norms governing applications of them, in the sense of setting authoritative standards for assessments of the correctness of applications that accordingly show up as responsible to them. In that process, actual applications of concepts play the role both of causes and of reasons. As actual applications of concepts, the causes are also takings-to-be-correct. Such attitudes also determine what is correct. The relations of dependence (authority and responsibility) between attitude and norm are reciprocal. We could think of this reciprocity in terms of a positive feedback loop, or as the process of achieving a Rawlsian reflective equilibrium—and neither of those would be wrong. But Hegel's story has a *lot* more structure than either of those models (which can still serve as useful points of comparison). The main point of the *Phenomenology* as I read it is to teach us about how conceptual contents, the norms that articulate truth, are determined by the process that is the experience of error, and especially the role played in that process by its recollective-reconstructive phase. It is that understanding, replacing the categories of *Verstand* with those of *Vernunft*, that permits us to overcome alienation by showing us in detail how to reconcile modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses with the *sittlich*

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appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes. Hegel moves beyond the strategy of overcoming alienation by embracing *Gelassenheit* to offer a detailed systematic account of the recollective dimension of the experiential process that institutes, articulates, and sustains the reciprocal attitude-dependence of normative statuses and status-dependence of normative attitudes.

Before turning to an exposition of that account, it is worth looking beyond Wittgenstein and pointing to two further contemporary philosophical manifestations of alienation in Hegel's sense, one concerning jurisprudential theory and the other reductive scientific naturalism. These discussions can be brief, because both are familiar, though for quite different reasons. The jurisprudential case is familiar to readers of this work because I have appealed to it many times, beginning already in the discussion of the *Introduction*, as offering a paradigmatic example of how Hegel's explanation of the determination of conceptual content works, and in particular of the distinctive historical recognitive structure of reciprocal relations of authority and responsibility he invokes. Reductive scientific naturalism is familiar just because it is a ubiquitous presence in the contemporary philosophical scene.

The jurisprudential question concerns the origin, nature, and extent of the determinate contentfulness of the concepts used to formulate laws. The question is important because the rational authority of legal judgments and legal argumentation derives from the capacity of laws articulated by those concepts to serve as *reasons* justifying those judgments and arguments. It is essential to the normative bindingness of applications of legal concepts to particular cases that those applications can be *rationally* licensed by laws articulated by legal concepts. The issue arises most clearly in Anglo-American common law. By contrast to statute law, in which norms are made explicit in the form of stated principles, the legal norms articulated in common law are implicit in the tradition of applying them. All there is to determine the contents of the concepts of common law is the way they have in fact been applied in prior judicial decisions. The need to understand how legal norms can emerge from actual applications of those norms is not restricted to common law, however. For even where legal norms are stated explicitly in the form of rules or principles (statutes), they must be interpreted in order to be applied to particular cases. (This is a point to which Wittgenstein has sensitized philosophers.) Case law works like common law.⁶ What distinguishes these

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contexts is that the legal norms they involve are evidently attitude-dependent. What constitutes “strict liability” in assessment of torts is settled, insofar as it is settled at all, by the prior applications of that concept by judges deciding cases. They are the only source of authority that a current judge can appeal to in offering reasons justifying her own decision to apply or not apply that concept to a novel set of facts.

The fact that common and case law is in this sense “judge-made law” has seemed to some to offer grounds for skepticism about whether determinately contentful, genuinely binding norms have actually been instituted. Does not the idea that the process or practice of applying concepts determines the contents of norms governing such applications involve the naturalistic fallacy? For acknowledgment of the normative significance of conceptual contents means that understanding such contents to be conferred or instituted by the process of applying concepts requires a transition from “is” to “ought.” Somehow, what practitioners *actually* do in applying concepts—accepting some arguments and judgments articulated by a given constellation of concepts, and rejecting others—must be intelligible as settling what those practitioners *ought* to do—which such applications would be *correct*, in the sense of rationally justifiable by appeal to the contents of those concepts (in the context of the facts), and which not. One form such skepticism takes is to let normative attitudes do *all* the work, in effect dropping the notion of *norms* or *normative statuses* entirely. A statement of what is legal (a normative status) is understood as a matter-of-factual *prediction* about what a judge would decide (the judge’s normative attitude). Extreme forms of legal realism in addition insist that what the judge says is typically determined by nonlegal reasons or causes. Legal decisions are brought about causally by such factors as “what the judge had for breakfast,” as the slogan has it (and more realistically, by her training, culture circle, reading, and political inclinations).

The point I want to make by gesturing at this skeptical challenge in the philosophy of law is just that it clearly deserves to be counted as a manifestation of *alienation* in Hegel’s sense. The intelligibility of the governing authority of norms over normative attitudes, of what *is* right over what is *taken* to be right—that is, the status-dependence of normative attitudes—is understood to be threatened by the attitude-dependence of norms (normative statuses). This line of thought is generally thought to be corrosive of jurisprudential practice, which depends on the traditional commitment of the responsible

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jurist not to *make* the law, but to *find out* what it already is. But such *sittlich* acknowledgment of the status-dependence of normative attitudes seems incompatible with the legal positivists' appreciation of the attitude-dependence of legal norms. From Hegel's point of view, of course, both of the parties to this debate are defending one-sided views. The former sees only the judge's authority, but not his responsibility, and the latter sees only his responsibility, but not his authority. What is needed is an account that does justice to both, to their essential interrelations with one another, and to the way the process of which both are aspects determines conceptual contents. That is precisely what Hegel offers us—and is the direct applicability of his account to his case that has motivated my recurring invocation of it in expounding his resolution in these pages.⁷

The final contemporary philosophical expression of normative alienation I want to point to is reductive scientific naturalism about norms. A good point of departure is the Sellarsian principle that has come to be called the "*scientia mensura*":

In the dimension of describing and explaining, science is the measure of all things, of those that are, that they are, and of those that are not, that they are not. [EPM §41]

Sellars was a Kantian, who took on board as master ideas two of Kant's most basic insights. The first is the normative character of intentionality. The second is the idea that some concepts do not play the ground-level role of describing or explaining, but rather make explicit essential features of the conceptual framework that makes describing and explaining possible. Sellars gave that second thought a Carnapian twist, by treating the concepts that play that categorial role as essentially *metalinguistic*. Following out the first thought, for Sellars, prime among the framework-explicating concepts are concepts articulating the normativity of discursive activity. So the opening phrase of Sellars's slogan is specifically meant to exclude normative concepts from those over which science is claimed to have exclusive ontological dominion. For he takes it that because they do play metalinguistic roles, they therefore *cannot* play descriptive or explanatory roles. Perhaps this is not so. Even if he is right about their categorial role, perhaps Sellars is wrong to deny normative concepts descriptive and explanatory roles, and so to exclude

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them from the intended scope of the *scientia mensura*. In any case the subsequent philosophical tradition has not so far been much cognizant of or influenced by Sellars's sophisticated views on this point. The line of thought I am concerned to point to here is one that is widely shared in the contemporary philosophical scene and that is well formulated by Sellars's naturalistic principle, taken against his intent as applying specifically to what is picked out by the use of normative vocabulary.

In its starkest form, the idea is that norms and normative statuses are explanatorily otiose. They are not to be found in the causal order as it is made visible by natural science, and (so) need never be appealed to in explanations of events that are in that order. There are only normative attitudes. People really do *take* some behaviors to be appropriate and others inappropriate, they do *attribute* authority and responsibility, commitment and entitlement. Those practical attitudes *are* in the natural order and *can* appropriately be invoked in explaining why people do what they do. But *all* the explanatory work can be done by normative attitudes. There is no explanatory surplus gained by postulating, in addition to people's adopting practical attitudes of *taking* or *treating* something as right or wrong, actual statuses of *being* right or wrong. While the best explanation of people's beliefs and intentions concerning electrons is that there really are electrons—that's why things work out as they do in our interactions with them—the best explanation of people's normative beliefs and intentions are just more beliefs and intentions: theirs, those of their parents and teachers, those of the ones they interact with practically and verbally. If that is right, then it seems we do not have the same sorts of reasons to believe in norms that we do in electrons. The argument Harman offers for the specific case of morality is a case in point.

At least in its general outlines, I suppose this is a familiar line of thought. I have argued that this way of thinking is already visible in the person of Hegel's allegorical valet, for whom the status-dependence of his master's attitudes, the responsibility they acknowledge to authoritative duties, remains invisible, supplanted by self-standing self-regarding attitudes. This *niederträchtig* meta-attitude is an extreme version of the modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses: the authority of attitudes over statuses. For according to this extreme version of that modern insight, normative statuses have no actual existence. They have only a virtual existence, as the objects of normative attitudes. No attitude-transcendent

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statuses are instituted at all. Such a view is a kind of *ne plus ultra* of alienation.

And this view is contestable in its own right. For an argument-to-best-explanation strategy to yield an attitudes-only ontological verdict, it needs to restrict the vocabulary in which both what is to be explained and what is available to explain it are specified, so as to meet two criteria of adequacy. It is not clear that they can be jointly satisfied. The scientific naturalism version excludes from the realm of facts whose best explanation need appeal only to attitudes facts such as that murder is wrong. Indeed, descriptions such as that, couched in normative terms, are not available in the language of natural science. But the *normative attitudes* for which explanations are sought and in terms of which explanations are to be given must then themselves be specifiable in that same language of natural science. This is a tall order. It is by no means clear that any specification of attitudes that can be given in the nonnormative language of the natural sciences can be entitled to treat them as having *any* determinate semantic content, never mind determinate content that is itself specifiable entirely in nonnormative terms. One would need such a specification in order to make sense of norms as having even virtual existence as the objects of acknowledgment and attribution in such normative attitudes.

A version of an argument along these lines against a naturalistic attitudes-only reductionism about norms is implicit in Hegel's positive account of the reciprocal relation between normative attitudes and normative statuses—in the way he reconciles the traditional *sittlich* appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes with the modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. What is most impressive, I think, is that he does not restrict himself to criticizing one-sided ways of thinking, such as the contemporary philosophical manifestations of alienation we have just rehearsed. He offers a detailed account of how things actually work. I have gestured at five contemporary lines of philosophical thought: meta-ethical relativism; Kripke's Wittgenstein's "rule-following considerations"; Wittgenstein's broader concern with the apparent tension between the contingency of conceptual content and the rational bindingness of conceptual norms; jurisprudential puzzling about how, if it is judge made, case and common law can be understood as having the binding force of law; and reductive scientific naturalism about norms. According to Hegel's conceptual

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scheme, they all deserve to be seen disparagingly as manifestations of modern alienation. They all accordingly set appropriate criteria of adequacy against which his constructive metaphysical account of both the semantics and the normative pragmatics of discursive practices should be measured. It is to that account that we next turn.

IV. Three Stages in the Articulation of Idealism

On the ground floor of Hegel's intellectual edifice stands his nonpsychological conception of the conceptual. This is the idea that to be conceptually contentful is to stand in relations of material incompatibility and consequence (his "determinate negation" and "mediation") to other such contentful items. The relations of incompatibility and consequence are denominated "material" to indicate that they articulate the *contents* rather than *form* of what stands in those relations. This is his first and most basic semantic idea: an understanding of conceptual content in terms of modally robust relations of exclusion and inclusion.

The next move is to think of the relation between conceptual content, so understood, and the forms such contents can take. The result is a *hylomorphic* conception of the conceptual. Conceptual contents, understood as roles with respect to relations of material incompatibility and consequence, are amphibious: they show up in two different forms. They have a *subjective* form and an *objective* form. The subjective form articulates what things are or can be *for consciousness*, and the objective form articulates what things are or can be *in themselves*. The second is the form of empirical *reality*; the first is the form in which that empirical reality *appears* to knowing subjects. They are related as the two poles of the intentional nexus: what can be *known* and the attempted *knowing* of it, noumena and phenomena. Genuine knowledge requires that one and the *same* content shows up in *both* different forms: the subjective form of thought and the objective form of fact. Conceptual contents of the two forms stand in a broadly representational relation to one another, as subjective *representings* of reality and the objective realities *represented*. Hegel's second semantic idea is this consequence of the hylomorphic development of the first: the two forms of conceptual content stand to one another in *representational* relations. These two dimensions of semantic contentful-

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ness, the intelligible and the representational, can be thought of as Hegelian versions of the Fregean metaconcepts of sense and reference (*Sinn* and *Be-deutung*): thoughts and what thoughts are about, what can be expressed and what can be represented.

Hegel's semantic explanatory strategy is to explain the representational dimension of conceptual contentfulness in terms of the basic sense of conceptual contentfulness as articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence. What it is to represent something is to be understood in terms of relations among conceptual contents. The idea of a noumenal reality is to be explained in terms of how phenomenal appearances point beyond themselves, in virtue of their relations to one another. This is one sense in which his book counts as a "phenomenology." This account is essentially expressivist and historical. Its key concept is recollection.

Another idea that is of the first importance for this enterprise is that conceptual content in the most basic sense is an essentially *modal* notion. The relations that in the first instance articulate conceptual contents of either form are *modal* relations. Incompatibility relations codify conjunctions (in a broad sense) that do not merely *happen* not to hold, but that are *forbidden* or *ruled out*. Consequential relations codify conjunctions that do not just happen to hold, but that are *obligatory* or *must* hold. The relations of incompatibility and consequence Hegel understands as articulating conceptual contents are related to one another as the two paired modalities of necessity and impossibility, or obligation and prohibition are related to one another. (That is one of the ways *negation* is built so deeply into his system.)

Of course it matters a lot for such a view how the modal force in question is understood. Here Hegel's revolutionary idea is that the two forms conceptual contents can show up in correspond to two different kinds of modality. Modal relations of incompatibility and consequence have both *alethic* and *deontic* forms. They can be given both *nomological* and *normative* readings. These are the modalities that articulate the objective realm of being (reality, how things are in themselves) and the subjective realm of thought (appearance, how things are for consciousness, how they are taken to be), respectively.

On the objective side of reality, the properties of being a mammal and being a reptile are incompatible in the sense that it is *impossible* for them to be conjoined in one object at the same time. The property of being a mammal

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has being a vertebrate as a consequence in the sense that it is *necessary* that any creature that is a mammal is a vertebrate. On the subjective side of thought, it is not impossible to take one and the same creature to be both a mammal and a reptile. Those thoughts are incompatible rather in the sense that one *ought not* conjoin them. If one takes a creature to be a mammal, it is possible that one does not take it also to be a vertebrate. But one *ought* to do so, one is *committed* or *obliged* to do so. The relations of incompatibility and consequence that articulate the conceptual contents of objective properties and states of affairs are alethic modal relations of noncompossibility and necessity, codified in laws of nature. The relations of incompatibility and consequence that articulate the conceptual contents of subjective thoughts are deontic normative relations. Two thought-contents are incompatible when one cannot be *entitled* to commitments to both, though one might do so anyway. One thought-content is a consequence of another when commitment to one entails commitment to the other—though the actual attitudes of individual thinking subjects might not always actually include acknowledging that normative status. In addition to Hegel’s terms “determinate negation” and “mediation” having these paired senses, one for each form content can take, so too do “independence” and “dependence.” On the side of subjects, they are read normatively or deontically, as authority and responsibility; on the side of objects, alethically, in terms of necessity.

The resulting view is a kind of *conceptual realism*. For it takes the reality thought about, no less than thoughts about it, already to be in conceptual shape. It does that by starting with a conception of the conceptual that is not restricted to thoughts as thinkings, as psychological events or processes. It ties the conceptual to thought only in the Fregean sense of thinkables. (Frege says: “A fact is a thought that is true.”⁸) On this conception, to be conceptually contentful is to stand in relations of incompatibility and consequence: to exclude and include other conceptually contentful items. The relations of incompatibility and consequence that articulate conceptual contents (and so count as “material” relations) are modally robust ones. So Hegel’s is a modal conceptual realism. His particular version is hylomorphic. Conceptual contents can take two forms: objective and subjective. Those two forms correspond to two different kinds of modality, alethic and deontic, nomological and normative. What accordingly becomes visible as *bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism* makes intelligible the possibility of genuine knowledge,

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by understanding conceptual content as actualizable in two forms: an objective form articulated by alethic nomological relations of necessary consequence and noncompossibility and a subjective form articulated by deontic normative relations of obligatory consequence and prohibited conjunction.

On an account of this shape, the subjective and objective poles of the intentional nexus, representings in thought and what in reality is represented thereby, correspond to the two modal forms conceptual contents can take. So implementing the semantic explanatory strategy of showing how to understand the representational dimension of conceptual contentfulness (“of”-intentionality) in terms of the expressive dimension (“that”-intentionality) requires explaining the relations between nomological and normative preclusion and inclusion, between alethic and deontic incompatibility and consequence. For it is those notions of incompatibility and consequence that articulate the basic notion of conceptual content.

The next large conceptual contribution Hegel makes in investigating the relations between the modally articulated realms of thought and being is a contribution to that investigation that takes the form of a broadly epistemic and semantic thesis. It is a pair of claims about what is required to *understand* the different kinds of modal structures. The first is perhaps not surprising: an essential aspect of understanding the structure of thought about the objective world is understanding the structure of the world being thought about. Less conventionally, he claims conversely that one cannot understand the most fundamental structure of the objective world unless one also understands the structure of the activity of thinking about it. Together these claims assert a *reciprocal sense-dependence* between the metaconcepts articulating the alethic modal nomological structure of the objective world and the deontic normative structure of the subjective world of thought. At a finer grain, the claim is that there is a reciprocal sense-dependence between the metaconcepts articulating the alethic modal structure of *law-governed facts* about *objects* and *properties*, on the side of objective reality, and the metaconcepts articulating the deontic normative structure of the processes and practices of *inferring*, *asserting* or *judging*, and *referring* and *classifying*, on the side of the subjective graspings in thought of those objective structures.

This is an epistemic and conceptual claim, not an ontological one. That is, what is claimed is sense-dependence, not reference-dependence. The thesis is not that there would be no laws, facts, objects, or properties if there were

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no activities of inferring and explaining, stating and judging, referring and classifying. (The converse is uncontroversially true.) The claim is that one cannot *understand* what one is talking about in talking about laws and facts and objects with properties unless one also understands what one is *doing* in inferring and explaining, stating and judging, referring and classifying. Some terms, such as “superior” and “subordinate” are both reciprocally sense-dependent and reciprocally reference-dependent. You cannot understand one unless you understand the other, and the phenomena they indicate cannot occur except in tandem. The largest normative categorial structures of activities of thinking and the largest modal categorial structures of the objective world thought about are reciprocally sense-dependent, with only a one-way reference-dependence: of the actual existence of activities of inferring, judging, and referring and classifying on the actual existence of laws, facts, and objects with properties.

In Chapter 7 I called this thesis “objective idealism.” It tells us we cannot understand the ontological structure of the objective world, its coming as law-governed facts about the properties of objects, except in terms that make essential reference to what subjects have to *do* in order to count as *taking* the world to have that structure—even though the world could have that structure in the absence of any subjects and their epistemic activities. What one needs to *do* in order to count thereby as treating two facts as incompatible in the alethic modal sense is to treat the corresponding subjective doxastic *commitments* as incompatible in the normative sense. That is to take it that commitment to one precludes entitlement to the other, so that if one finds oneself with both of them one is obliged to *do* something further, to *change* the situation by relinquishing at least one of the commitments. This is the deep connection between *determinate negation* and *change* or *movement*, which is central to Hegel’s system. What one needs to do in order to count thereby as treating one fact as a nomological consequence of another is practically to acknowledge that commitment to one *obliges* one to acknowledge commitment to the other.

It is obvious that one cannot understand anything about laws, facts, and objects with properties unless one *can* engage in the practices of inferring and explaining, asserting and judging, and referring and classifying. Those are things one must be able to *do* in order to count as thinking about things at all. The further claim is that one’s grasp of the *concept law* as a categorial

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ontological feature of the objective world essentially depends on one's understanding the role statements of laws play in explanation, and so in subjunctively robust inferences. Laws are the sort of thing expressed by modally qualified quantified conditionals (in the simplest case, "Necessarily, all A's are B's"). One's grasp of the *concept fact* as a categorial ontological feature of the objective world essentially depends on one's understanding that facts are stables, judgeables, thinkables. They are the sort of thing expressed by the declarative sentences one uses to say things.

Similarly, one's grasp of the *concepts object* and *property* as a categorial ontological feature of the objective world essentially depends on one's understanding that objects are what one refers to by using singular terms and properties are what one classifies objects as falling under by using predicates. A necessary condition of understanding the ontological structure of the objective world empirical consciousness is consciousness of is that one must also understand the epistemic activities by which consciousness can become conscious of it. That is why there is the reciprocal sense-dependence, but not reference-dependence that objective idealism claims, of concepts articulating the ontological structure of the objective world, such as *object*, *property*, *fact*, and *law*, on the one hand, and concepts articulating the processes and practices of talking and thinking about that world, such as *referring*, *describing*, *judging* or *asserting*, and *inferring* (and so *singular term*, *predicate*, *declarative sentence*, and *subjunctive conditional*), on the other.

The objective pole of the intentional nexus is structured by subjunctively robust nomological relations. We understand these relations and the relata they articulate functionally (so holistically) in terms of their role in a whole constellation of lawfully related facts, surrounded, as it were, by a penumbra of excluded and merely possible states of affairs (Hegel's "inverted world"). Those facts in turn articulate lawful relations among properties and the objects that exhibit them, surrounded, as it were, by a penumbra of excluded properties and impossible objects. The subjective pole of the intentional nexus is structured by processes and practices that are norm-governed, in the sense of being subject to normative appraisal. We understand these norm-governed activities functionally, and so holistically, in terms of their role in a whole constellation of commitments, articulated by subjunctively robust inferential relations among judgments and practical commitments, surrounded, as it were, by a penumbra of excluded and merely possible

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commitments—thinkables to which the thinking subject in question ought not to be or is not committed. Those claims in turn are articulated by acts of referring and classifying, expressed by the use of singular terms and predicates that can be used to express many more judgeables. This constellation of subjective doxastic commitments articulated by further commitments regarding which doxastic commitments are incompatible with or are consequences of others is what Hegel calls “the Concept.”

At the grossest level of structure, the objective realm of being is articulated by nomological *relations*, and the subjective realm of thought is articulated by norm-governed *processes, activities* or *practices*. We saw that it can be asked how things stand with the intentional nexus between these realms. Should it be construed in *relational* or *practical-processual* terms? If these are not mutually exclusive (as Hegel in fact understands things), so that both semantic relations and pragmatic discursive activities of knowing and acting are essential, does one have conceptual—that is, explanatory—priority over the other? Objective idealism asserts that the nomological and normative aspects of those relations and practices (what is expressed by alethic and deontic modal vocabulary), respectively, are reciprocally sense-dependent. Understanding these aspects of the two realms is symmetrical: each can be understood only as part of a whole that contains the other as well. For the norms articulate what one must *do* in order to count thereby as claiming that the nomological *relations* hold. But what about the activities and relations themselves? Here I claimed that Hegel takes there to be an explanatory asymmetry in that the semantic *relations* between those discursive practices and the objective relations they know about and exploit practically are *instituted by* the discursive practices that both articulate the subjective realm of thought and establish its relations to the objective realm of being. This asymmetry claim privileging specifically recollective discursive practices over semantic representational relations in understanding the intentional nexus between subjectivity and objectivity is the thesis of *conceptual idealism*.

The view Hegel develops in the *Phenomenology* is being expressed here by means of a progression of three ever more radical, distinctively Hegelian theses: bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism, the reciprocal sense-dependence of objective idealism, and recollective conceptual idealism. Each of these offers a sense in which the intentional nexus is to be understood

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as a special kind of unity that, each in its own way, cancels the distinction between its necessarily related poles, in virtue of the necessity of their being bound into the sort of unity they are. In each case, the related items are to be understood functionally, in terms of the role they play in the kind of unity in question. The first two make symmetry claims. Conceptual content is conceived in a unified way as what is articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence. It is then seen to show up in two forms, distinguished by the modality characteristic of each. In their objective form, incompatibility and consequence are alethic modal relations of noncompossibility and necessity. In their subjective form, incompatibility and consequence are deontic normative relations between commitments to which a subject cannot be simultaneously entitled and conclusions one ought to draw. Neither is accorded any priority or privilege over the other by the conceptual realist metaphysical claim. Those two modal forms are then asserted to be reciprocally sense-dependent. Neither can be understood apart from its relation to the other. Neither is accorded any priority or privilege over the other by the objective idealist epistemological claim. The conceptual idealism that digs deeper to explain and justify these less radical Hegelian theses breaks this symmetry. It asserts a distinctive kind of practical priority, and therefore a crucial dimension of explanatory priority, of norm-governed recollective discursive practices over alethic modal relations.

Because the objective world is both the cause of sense and the goal of intellect—the first a nomological matter and the second a normative one—cognition involves both alethic modal and deontic normative relations between the objective realm of being, whose structure is articulated by alethic modal relations and the subjective realm of thought, whose structure is articulated by deontic normative relations. The first are relations of *epistemic tracking*. They support subjunctively robust conditionals of the form “If the objective facts *were* different (or were to change) in such-and-such ways, the commitments endorsed in thought *would* be different in these-and-those ways.” These conditionals articulate a dimension of *authority* (independence) of the objective world over subjective thoughts—a dimension of *responsibility* (dependence) of thought to fact. This is the subjunctive sensitivity of thoughts to things. The second sort of relations are relations of *normative responsibility* of thought to fact. What things are for consciousness *ought* to

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conform to what things are in themselves. Those normative relations, too, express the authority of the objective over the subjective. Because the objective world is both the arena of action and the target of intention, intentional agency involves both alethic modal and deontic normative relations between the subjective and objective realms. Agency is *efficacious* insofar as subjunctively robust conditionals of the form “If the agent’s practical commitments *had* been different, the events in the objective world *would have* been different” hold. These articulate a dimension of authority of the subjective over the objective—a dimension of dependence of the objective world on subjective practical commitments. The normative standard of *success* of intentional agency is set by how things objectively are after an action. The idea of action includes a background structural commitment to the effect that things *ought* to be as they are intended to be. Conceptual idealism focuses on the fact that *all* these alethic and normative modal *relations* are instituted by the recollective *activity* that is the final phase of the cycle of cognition and action.

Conceptual realism asserts the identity of conceptual content between facts and thoughts of those facts. (Compare Wittgenstein: “When we say, and mean, that such-and-such is the case, we—and our meaning—do not stop anywhere short of the fact; but we mean: this-is-so.” [PI §95]) Objective idealism asserts not an underlying semantic identity of content but a reciprocal semantic relation between the two different forms such contents can take: sense-dependence. The priority or dependence relation claimed by conceptual idealism is not in the first instance a semantic matter. It is not a relation between senses and senses, as in sense-dependence, or between referents and referents, as in reference-dependence. It is not even the semantic relation between senses and referents (representings and representeds). It is rather a matter of offering a *pragmatic* account of the practical process by which that semantic-intentional relation between what things are for consciousness and what they are in themselves is established. Pragmatics, as I am using the term, is the study of the *use* of concepts by subjects engaging in discursive practices. Conceptual idealism asserts a distinctive kind of explanatory priority (a kind of authority) of pragmatics over semantics. For this reason it is a *pragmatist* semantic explanatory strategy, and its idealism is a *pragmatist idealism*. The *sui generis* rational practical activity given pride of explanatory place by this sort of pragmatism is *recollection*.

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V. Recollection: How the Process of Experience Determines Conceptual Contents and Semantic Relations

The beating heart of the *Phenomenology* is the concept of experience [Erfahrung]. That is why Hegel's original title for it is "The Science of the *Experience* of Consciousness." Even after, in the course of writing the work, he came to see that "consciousness" picks out only one aspect of his real topic, *Geist*, he could still with full fidelity to his intentions have called it "The Science of the Experience of *Geist*." Experience is the process by which the Concept develops, and so the process by which its constituent concepts develop. It is of the essence of the reading presented here that the notion of experience functions at two levels, corresponding to the two fundamental kinds of concepts Hegel distinguishes. These are "logical," speculative [begrifflich, begreifend], or philosophical concepts, on the one hand, and ordinary empirical and practical "determinate" concepts, on the other.

The origin of the distinction lies in Kant's revolutionary idea that besides the concepts that we deploy to describe and explain empirical goings-on, there are concepts whose distinctive expressive role is to make explicit crucial structural features of the framework that makes description and explanation possible. (Among them are alethic modal and deontic normative concepts.) Kant thought there was a single set of such categories that could express the structure of discursive activity *überhaupt*. The recollective story Hegel tells in the *Phenomenology* is a rationally reconstructed history of the expressively progressive development of "shapes of (self-)consciousness," which are articulated by different, more or less adequate categorial metaconcepts. It culminates, however, in a single set of expressively adequate philosophical concepts. The master strategy animating this reading of Hegel (and of Kant) is *semantic descent*: the idea that the ultimate point of studying these metaconcepts is what their use can teach us about the semantic contentfulness of ground-level concepts, so the best way to understand the categorial metaconcepts is to use them to talk about the use and content of ordinary concepts. It is because it is aimed at extracting such lessons that what is being offered is a *semantic* reading of the *Phenomenology*. It is a *pragmatist* semantic reading because the key to understanding the conceptual contentfulness common to the objective empirical world of lawfully

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related facts about objects and their properties and the normative subjective activity of thinking (undertaking commitments by inferring and claiming, referring and classifying) is found to lie in the discursive practice and process of experience. The lead role in Hegel's account of experience as instituting semantic relations is played by recollection.

The pragmatic metaconcept of the process of experience is first put in play in the *Introduction*, at the very beginning of the book, in the form of the experience of *error*. It is invoked to explain how the consciousness-constitutive distinction-and-relation between what things are *for* consciousness and what things are *in* themselves shows up *to* consciousness itself. Hegel assumes that, however vaguely understood it might be at the outset, it is a distinction-and-relation that can at least be a topic *for us*, the readers of the book, the phenomenological self-consciousness that under his guidance is rehearsing the development of phenomenal self-consciousness. Hegel's terminology of what things are explicitly "for consciousness" and what things are "in themselves" [an sich] ("implicitly") is his preferred way of talking about what I have been calling the "intentional nexus," which relates the subjective realm of thought, the way things *appear* to subjects, with the objective realm of being, the way things *really* are. It is, as emerges already in the *Introduction*, the phenomenon addressed by the distinction between subjective *representings* and objective *represented*s (baked into Early Modern philosophical thought about mind and knowledge by Descartes). Partly on that basis, I have urged that we can think about it as the fundamental *semantic* relation between what Frege calls "sense" and "referent" (*Sinn* and *Bedeutung*). The question is how this crucial distinction already shows up practically for even the most metatheoretically naïve knowing subject. How are we to understand the basic fact that

the difference between the in-itself and the for-itself is already present in the very fact that consciousness knows an object at all. Something is *to it* the in-itself, but the knowledge or the being of the object for consciousness is *to it* still another moment. [PG 85]

This is the most primitive, practical form of *self*-consciousness—awareness of what consciousness is—available even to conceptually untutored "natural consciousness."

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Hegel traces its origin to the experience of *error*—to what happens when a subject inevitably eventually discovers that it is in some instance *wrong*, that things are not in fact as they seemed. It is in having to *give up* a view that becomes untenable that it becomes visible as a *view* (a representing), normatively answerable for its correctness to how things actually are (what is represented). When an error is practically acknowledged, what was *to* the subject a reality is unmasked and revealed as merely a guise, an appearance, a way things were only *for* the subject. One took the stick to be bent. On pulling it all the way out of the water, one sees that it was really straight all along. One's prior view shows up as just a view, a way it looked. That change of view involves distinguishing how things merely look from how they really are.

Later on in the book Hegel will root this sort of experience in our biological nature as desiring beings. For a kind of desire, such as hunger, comes with a characteristic associated sort of practical activity: eating. And responding to something in the environment by engaging in that activity, eating it, is according it a distinctive sort of practical significance: food. The very same desire that motivates the associated activity and defines that practical significance then serves as a protonormative standard of correctness. What a creature practically takes or treats *as* food, by eating it, can turn out *not really to be* food, if eating it does not satisfy the hunger that motivated it. Eating something that turns out to be disgusting, or just unsatisfying, is the most primitive form of the experience of error. In it one learns that what one took to be food, what appeared to one as food (what one practically represented as food), was not in fact food. When a creature goes through that process of error and discovery, the distinction between what things are *for* it (the practical significance it practically assigned to them) and what things are *in themselves* (the practical significance they actually have, as assessed by the satisfaction of desire) becomes something *to* that creature. It is how a distinction between appearance and reality shows up practically already for preconceptual, merely desiring organisms. This sort of experience is the basis and practical form of *learning*. It is because it is also for Hegel the practical basis for the semantic distinction between representings and representeds, sense and referent, that his deserves to be called a “pragmatist semantics.” The justice of this characterization becomes still more evident further along in the book, when Hegel broadens his concern from the experience of error

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to the full cycle of cognition and action, which underwrites and incorporates not only cognitive error and knowledge, but also the practical failure and success of intentional actions.

We saw that the most basic concept in the purely semantic strand of Hegel's thought is his understanding of the conceptual—in the sense of the graspable, what thoughts have in common with facts—in terms of relations of incompatibility and consequence. This is the semantic basis from which the expressive-recollective account of the representational dimension of conceptual content is elaborated. It, too, is explained in terms of the experience of error. For an essential part of the acknowledgment of error is practically taking or treating two commitments as incompatible. Such genuinely conceptual activity goes beyond what merely desiring beings engage in. The origins of Hegel's idea here lie in Kant's earlier broadly pragmatist account of what knowing subjects must *do* in order to count as apperceiving. Apperception is *sapient* awareness, as opposed to the merely *sentient* awareness exhibited by desiring animals. For Kant, to be aware in the narrower sense is to synthesize a constellation of commitments that exhibits a distinctive kind of unity: apperceptive unity. This is a *rational* unity—and hence, he thinks, a *discursive* unity, in the sense of one that is *conceptually* articulated. It is a rational unity because of the distinctive kinds of norms that govern its synthesis.

Synthesizing a constellation of commitments (both doxastic and practical) exhibiting the rational unity distinctive of apperception is practically acknowledging a variety of task responsibilities. The one that matters most for Hegel's later construal of the experience of error is the *critical* task responsibility to extrude incompatible commitments. When one finds oneself with commitments that are incompatible, by one's own lights—that is, according to the contents one thereby counts as attributing to them—one must practically acknowledge the responsibility to *do* something: to change or relinquish at least one of them. There is also a rational *ampliative* task responsibility to acknowledge commitment to the *consequences* of one's commitments: to draw conclusions that rationally follow from them. Further, there is a *justificatory* responsibility, to be able to give *reasons* justifying the commitments one incorporates in the evolving constellation. Being apperceptively aware or conscious of something is *discursive* awareness of it, bringing it under a *concept*. The concept is for Kant accordingly a rule that determines

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what is incompatible with what (giving specific content to one's critical rational task responsibility) and what is a consequence of what (giving specific content to one's ampliative and justificatory task responsibilities). Conceptual contentfulness is suitability to play a functional role in the process of synthesizing a constellation of commitments exhibiting the rational unity characteristic of apperception. So conceptual content is a matter of standing in relations of material incompatibility and consequence to other such conceptually contentful items. This is a broadly pragmatist account, because the notion of conceptual content, which is the subject of *semantics*, is understood functionally in terms of the norm-governed practical synthetic *activity* by which one's commitments evolve and develop, which is the subject of *pragmatics*.

Hegel builds on Kant's model and develops it in his account of the experience of error. In doing so, he naturalizes Kant's account, in a broad sense, bringing it down to earth by grounding it in the preconceptual experience of desiring animals. But he also radicalizes and generalizes both the methodological pragmatism that consists in reading off an account of conceptual contentfulness from an account of rational activity and the specific focus on incompatibility and consequence as the relations that articulate conceptual content. He further substantially adds to the picture of the experiential process that shapes the development of the constellation of commitments that the Concept comprises. As Kant would, Hegel sees a single episode of experiencing error as beginning with the *registration* of an anomaly: the acknowledgment that one finds oneself with commitments that are *incompatible*, in the sense that one cannot become entitled to them both (or to all of them). They preclude jointly fulfilling one's justificatory responsibility. Practically acknowledging that incompatibility is taking oneself to be obliged to *do* something, *change* something. This is the obligation to engage in a process of *repair* of the anomaly, to replace rational discord with rational harmony, by altering or giving up some of the offending commitments. At this point, Hegel breaks from the Kantian picture by adding a crucial constraint on what counts as successful repairs. Not just any rejiggering that removes the incompatibility suffices. Successful repairs must *explain* and *justify* the changes made, in a special way, by taking a distinctive form. The addition of this requirement, the characterization of this constraint, is one of Hegel's Big Ideas, and stands at the center of the conceptual idealism (and so the pragmatist semantics) of the *Phenomenology*.

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Hegel's idea is that vindication of a proposed reparative strategy in response to acknowledgment of incompatible commitments must take the form of a special kind of *historical* narrative: a recollection. One must tell a retrospective story that rationally reconstructs an idealized expressively progressive trajectory through previous changes of view that culminates in the view being endorsed after the repair of the most recently discovered anomaly. In the first stage of the experience of error, the previous conception of how things are, what played the role *to* consciousness of what things are *in* themselves, has been unmasked as appearance, and has accordingly shifted status. It now plays the role *to* consciousness of being only what things were *for* consciousness: an erroneous view of how things really are. To justify endorsing a new view as veridically representing how things really are in themselves, one must show how, assuming that things are that way, one did or could have come to *know* that things are that way.

Doxastic commitments are for Hegel implicitly knowledge claims. He has characteristic versions of all three of the dimensions of classical conceptions of knowledge as justified true belief. What I have been calling commitments, a kind of normative status, are the analogues of thoughts or beliefs (putative knowings), in his deontically inflected conception of the *geistig* realm of thought. Conceptual realism teaches that the truth dimension of such claims to knowledge is a matter of thought and fact sharing a common conceptual content. The demand for recollective vindication of one's commitments codifies Hegel's version of the justification dimension of claims to knowledge. This distinctive kind of justification requires showing how the previous views one held in the process leading up to the current candidate can properly be understood as views, appearances, or representings *of* what one now endorses as the reality one claims was all along being viewed, appearing, or being represented. To be entitled to claim that things are as one now takes them to be, one must show how one *found out* that they are so. Doing that involves explaining what one's earlier views got right, what they got wrong, and why. It involves rationally reconstructing the sequence of one's previous views of what one now takes to be the same topic so as to exhibit it as a process of *learning*, of gradual *discovery* of how things actually are. This is the progressive emergence into explicitness, the ever more adequate expression, of what is retrospectively discerned as having been all along implicit as the norm governing and guiding the process by which its appearances arise and pass away.

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Offering such a retrospective historical rational reconstruction of the process leading up to the constellation of commitments whose endorsement is being vindicated as the lesson properly to be learned from the earlier registering and reparative phases is the final, *recollective* phase of an episode of the experience of error. Recollection (Hegel's "Erinnerung") turns a *past* into a *history*.⁹ It transforms a mere description of past commitments into a progressive narrative of a sequence of lessons whereby how things really are, in themselves (according to one's current commitments), gradually came to be revealed, through that progressive sequence of ever more adequate appearances, culminating in one's current happy state of (as one takes it to be) *knowledge* of how things really are. A recollecting narrative is a narrative of *expressive* progress. It is a story about how what is now revealed to have been all along *implicit* in prior commitments, as the reality they were appearances of (the noumena behind the phenomena), gradually emerged to become fully *explicit*, showing up as what it really is, in the view currently endorsed, in which that process culminated. It is a story of how what things are in themselves ("an sich") becomes what they explicitly are for consciousness.

Already something thought, the *content* is the property of substance; existence has no more to be changed into the form of what is in-itself and implicit, but only the *implicit*—no longer merely something primitive, or lying hidden within existence, but already present as a *recollection*—into the form of what is *explicit*, of what is objective to self.
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A recollection accordingly exhibits past commitments that have been discarded because of their incompatibility with others as genuine (if only partially correct) appearances *of* reality as it is now known to be, and in that sense as not *merely* illusory.

As was indicated already in the discussion of Hegel's *Introduction*, this recollective phase of the experience of error is meant to explain "of"-intentionality in terms of "that"-intentionality—the representational dimension of thought in terms of its conceptual contentfulness. Conceptual contentfulness in Hegel's sense is what thoughts and facts (phenomena and noumena) can share: being articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence to other similarly contentful items. What practically

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distinguishes what is *taken* or *treated* by a conscious subject *as* noumenal, as how things really are, in themselves, from what it takes or treats *as* phenomenal, as presenting an appearance of things, is just the subject's *commitment* or *endorsement* of the content. (This is adopting an attitude that undertakes a normative status.) Doxastically endorsing a conceptual content *is* taking it to be a fact. That *what* one takes to be facts (which contents, exactly, one endorses) *changes* is just a change in status of the contents involved during the registration and repair stages of the experience of error. The old content changes status from being endorsed to not being endorsed, and its replacement changes status from not being endorsed to being endorsed. What was *to* consciousness noumenal reality is unmasked as phenomenal appearance, and replaced by a different content, newly endorsed as objectively factual. The recollective stage of an experience of error justifies this change of status by forging a distinctive kind of link between the content newly endorsed as noumenal and all the previously endorsed contents that now are taken to be phenomena. It is a representational link, in virtue of which they show up to the conscious subject as phenomenal appearances *of* that noumenal reality. The link is forged by offering a retrospective recollective rational reconstruction of a sequence of phenomena culminating in the facts as one currently takes them to be. That rational reconstruction exhibits them as all along implicitly normatively governed by their link to that noumenal reality, in the sense that it serves as the normative standard by which their adequacy *as* phenomenal appearances of it is to be assessed.

This recollective story about the representational dimension of conceptual content is, crucially, an *expressive* account of it. It explains how what was, according to each recollection, always *implicit* ("an sich," what things are in themselves), becomes ever more *explicit* (for consciousness). The recollective story is an *expressively* progressive one. The representational relation between senses and referents is established by displaying a sequence of appearances that are ever more adequate expressions of an underlying reality. In general Hegel thinks we can understand what is implicit only in terms of the expressive process by which it is made explicit. That is a recollective process. The underlying reality is construed as implicit in the sense of being a norm that all along governed the process of its gradual emergence into explicitness. Without at any earlier point being fully explicit to the consciousness undergoing the experi-

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ence, according to the recollection that unveils it as what the appearances were appearances of, it nonetheless practically (hence, implicitly) governed the process. According to the retrospective rational reconstruction that is the recollection, it served as a normative standard for better and worse appearances, accordingly as they revealed (expressed) that reality more adequately. And according to the recollection, those assessments were efficacious. The metanorm that governs recollection (determining better and worse recollections) demands *expressive* progress: progress in making explicit what shows up as having been all along implicit. This recollective notion of expression is more fundamental than the notion of representation it is called on to explain.

Telling that sort of recollective reconstructive story is offering a *phenomenology* of a view (a set of commitments). A phenomenology vindicates that view by showing how it gradually emerged into the explicit light of day from the partial, variously erroneous appearances of it. This is what Hegel does at the metalevel for various “shapes” of self-consciousness (and ultimately, of the whole of *Geist*) in the *Phenomenology*. The final, adequate form of self-consciousness (“Absolute Knowing”) knows itself as engaging in a process of this historical recollective kind in its dynamic experience of ground-level empirical and practical commitments and the determinate concepts that articulate them. Such a phenomenology vindicates the endorsement of some conceptual contents as noumenal reality, as objectively factual, by showing how they explain the sequential variety of phenomenal appearances by which a subject comes to know them *as* noumenal reality, and thereby explain the advent of that knowledge.

A recollective reconstruction does that by exhibiting the various erroneous beliefs *that* things are thus and so (phenomena) as appearances of the facts as they really are (noumena). A recollection performs a great reversal: what eventuates from a process of repeated experiences of error, as its final (thus far) *end* or result, is placed, as it were, also at the *beginning* of the sequence.

We shall not cease from exploration
 And the end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time.¹⁰

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(Hegel often uses circular imagery in this connection.) For the fact is seen as what drives its progressive revelation. How things actually are is recollectively revealed as normatively governing the process both deontically, as a standard of assessment of expressive success, and alethically, as that to which the episodes that count as expressively progressive are subjunctively sensitive. It is at once the cause of a course of experience and its goal. Linguistically, the kind of link that holds such a recollected history together is *anaphoric*. Hegel introduces it in the *Sense Certainty* chapter when he focuses on the sort of “this” . . . “it” . . . “it” . . . chain by which an initially unrepeatably demonstrative thought must be able to be taken up and repeated in order to be cognitively significant for subsequent thought. Later elements of the anaphoric chain pick up their referents from the earlier one, in virtue of the anaphoric repetition structure to which they belong. In the case of phenomenological recollection, the conceptual content that is endorsed as factual, as the underlying noumenon, is taken to be *referred to* by all the phenomena thereby linked to it as appearances *of* it. The recollective reversal marks the fact that this anaphoric chain also runs backward, with the anaphoric dependents temporally preceding the anaphoric “antecedent” on which their reference depends, and from which it is inherited.¹¹ Hegel deepens and further articulates his view of such relations when in the *Reason* chapter’s discussion of intentional agency he explains how the intention [Absicht] that regulates an ongoing action can only retroactively be attributed, and is anaphorically linked to the various phases of the action it normatively governs. The fact that the model in terms of which we ought to understand the recollective phase of the experience of error as establishing a referential or representational relation between reality and its appearance in cognition is for Hegel to be drawn from the recollective form in which an agent’s doings are to be made intelligible as intentional is a significant component of his conceptual idealism.

Even at the ground level, as addressed to determinate empirical concepts, an *Erinnerung*, then, is a phenomenology: a process in which the stages of a rationally reconstructed sequence of conceptually contentful commitments are anaphorically referred back to the view in which they culminate, as phenomenal appearances or views *of* that noumenal reality. At the end of the *Force and Understanding* chapter, Hegel puts on the table the idea that the sense in which objective reality “stands behind” subjective appearances of it

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is best understood in ultimately *expressive* terms, rather than representational ones. The noumenal reality is revealed as *implicit in* phenomena accordingly assessable as more or less adequate partial expressions of it by recollectively arranging them in an expressively progressive history of the emergence of what was implicit into the explicit daylight of the view currently endorsed (which is to say endorsed as factual).

Stories of this recollective-vindicating sort are familiar from various institutional practices. Old-fashioned histories of science typically took the form of pointing to some feature of current scientific theories (genes are encoded by sequences of DNA base pairs, the division between subatomic particles described by Fermi-Dirac statistics and those described by Bose-Einstein statistics is exclusive and exhaustive, etc.) and then offering a canned Whiggish account of the process by which this truth was gradually discovered, one feature emerging from this experiment or conceptual breakthrough, another from that one. False starts, wrong turns, and dead ends are ignored, except insofar as some bit of the truth is taken to have been revealed thereby. For another example, the final results of complex medical diagnoses are explained by telling stories of this sort: “Even though the patient *did* have an infection, the absence of cytokines in the blood showed that, contrary to what we had thought, the fever must be exogenous.” And—to invoke a comparison I have returned to repeatedly in this work—recollective vindications also play an absolutely essential role in jurisprudential practice. This is clearest in case law, and (because it is essentially “case law all the way down”) especially common law. For there the principal form of justification a judge can offer for her application of a legal concept (strict liability, duty of care, etc.) is a suitable rational reconstruction of prior applications, which are considered precedential in that they reveal explicitly some of the contours of the underlying law that is implicit in the juridical tradition.

Kant had the idea that representation is a normative concept. Something counts as a representing in virtue of being *responsible to* something else, which counts as represented by it in virtue of exercising *authority* over the representing by serving as a standard for assessments of its correctness *as* a representing. It is in precisely this sense that a recollective story treats the commitments it surveys as representings of the content currently treated as factual. The current commitment in which the sequence being reconstructed culminates is treated as authoritative for the previous commitments that

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sequence comprises (and them as responsible to it) in that it provides the standard for assessing the extent to which they are successful or adequate expressions (and so representations) of it. In picking out a trajectory from the actual experiences of error that led up to the currently endorsed conceptual content (all of which exhibit “that”-intentionality by standing in relations of incompatibility and consequence), a trajectory that is expressively progressive by that standard—thereby turning a mere past into an intelligible history of discovery—the recollection treats them as responsible *to* it in the sense required for them to be representations *of* it (to exhibit “of”-intentionality). It is the sort of process that institutes representational relations—the process whereby conceptual contents become representations “*to* (a) consciousness.”

It is accordingly by engaging in a course of experience, a sequence of episodes of the experience of error each of which exhibits all three phases—critical registration of an incompatibility of commitments, constructive repair of the incompatibility by alteration of commitments, and recollective vindication of the new constellation of commitments—that knowing subjects establish representational semantic relations between what play the roles for Hegel of senses and referents. Hegelian senses are, for him as for Frege, thoughts as thinkables. For Hegel that means conceptual contents, apt to be both thinkable and, when all goes right, factual: to be the facts thought or, as we could also say, thought about. They are thinkable, conceptually contentful, in virtue of standing in relations of material incompatibility and consequence to other such contents. As such, they exhibit “that”-intentionality. For they can be the content of thoughts *that* things are thus and so. Recollective rational reconstruction of an expressively progressive trajectory culminating in a thinkable endorsed as factual precipitates out a representational relation. That anaphorically structured representational relation exhibits the elements of the favored trajectory as exhibiting also “of”-intentionality by expressing contents that are more or less adequate explicit expressions, and so representations of the content finally endorsed, which accordingly shows up as having been all along implicit in them. This is Hegel’s story about what a subject has to *do* in order to bring about representational semantic relations between its thoughts and the facts. Recollection is accordingly the core of his pragmatist semantics, and of his conceptual idealism.

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Hegel's *Consciousness* chapters bring into relief the modally robust relations of material incompatibility and consequence that articulate the contents of the concepts we use in describing and explaining the empirical world. *Force and Understanding* ends by recommending that we replace a *representational* understanding of the laws of nature, expressed in alethic modal vocabulary, by an *expressive* understanding of the laws as making explicit something that is implicit in ordinary empirical statements of fact. This alternative is marked as taking us from *vorstellen* to *begreifen*, and hence as an integral part of moving from using metaconcepts with the structure of *Verstand* to those with the structure of *Vernunft*. The move from representation to expression is accordingly put forward as central to the lessons of the whole book. But at that point, there is very little flesh on the bones of the concept of expression as making explicit what is implicit. The meat is added by the account, in *Reason's* investigation of practical agency, of the retrospective recollective imputation of intentions as norms guiding and governing actions. What was only implicit when the action begins becomes more and more explicit as it unfolds. Recollection is what makes this process retrospectively visible as *expressively* progressive. By doing so it gives a definite sense to the notion of implicitness understood in terms of the recollective process of making it explicit. That model accordingly becomes available (retrospectively), for understanding the sense in which modal relations are to be understood as implicit in the facts they articulate, which Hegel put on the table at the end of *Force and Understanding*.

I have suggested that although both in the opening of the *Introduction* and at the end of *Force and Understanding*, Hegel strongly contrasts the way of thinking he wants to recommend—the expressive paradigm—with representational ways of thinking, his recollective elaboration of expression is designed to give semantic representationalism its due, by reconstructing in expressive terms what representationalists were right about. Conceptual content does have a representational dimension, and it can and ought to be understood ultimately in recollective expressivist terms. The strategy pursued in Chapter 12 to expound Hegel's expressivist rational reconstruction of representational relations is to use Frege's semantic vocabulary of sense and reference as an amphibious intermediary between representationalist and expressivist semantic idioms. On the one hand, it is recognizably a way of talking about representings and representeds. Senses do refer to, and in

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that sense represent, their referents. On the other hand, the senses that semantically determine reference are also thought of as intrinsically graspable. For Hegel, following Kant, that means they are conceptually contentful. Hegel's understanding of conceptual contentfulness as articulation by relations of material incompatibility and consequence provides a model of thoughts as senses.

Hylomorphic conceptual realism then underwrites the idea of the categorical homogeneity of senses as graspable thoughts and their referents (what they represent) as correspondingly conceptually contentful, storable facts. This makes intelligible the idea that thoughts are the explicit expressions of facts. They make explicit (for consciousness) how the world is (in itself, implicitly, "an sich"). The objective idealist appeal to a reciprocal sense-dependence between specifications of objective facts and their modal relations, on the one hand, and norm-governed processes of practically acknowledging the consequences of one's commitments by rejecting others and accepting yet others is one step in filling in the expressivist story. That story is completed by appealing to the model of practical agency to yield an understanding of *expression* in terms of *recollection*. The result is an expressive account of the representational dimension of conceptual content in the form of a recollective account of both representation and expression.

VI. From *Verstand* to *Vernunft*: Truth and the Determinateness of Conceptual Content

At the end of each successful episode of the experience of error rational harmony has been restored to the subject's commitments. The incompatibility detected has been repaired and the resulting constellation of commitments recollectively vindicated by recollecting it as the result of a course of experience that has been selected and rationally reconstructed as an unbroken triumphalist expressively progressive narrative of revelation and discovery—as the gradual making explicit of what is presented as having been all along implicit. But Hegel takes it that *every* achievement of this sort of rational equilibrium is temporary. It is fated to be disrupted by the eruption of new anomalies. Acquiring new empirical commitments immediately (in the sense of noninferentially, perceptually) and mediately, by inferentially extracting

consequences from one's current commitments (fulfilling one's ampliative rational task responsibility), will inevitably, sooner or later, result in one's finding oneself once again with commitments that are incompatible with one another, by one's own lights (the contents one takes them to have). The plight of finite knowing and acting subjects metaphysically guarantees liability to empirical error and practical failure. The experience of error is inescapable. What I earlier called the "false starts, wrong turns, and dead ends" of inquiry can be retrospectively edited out of the sanitized, Whiggish vindicating recollective narrative, but they cannot be avoided prospectively.

Why not? In short because the rational, conceptual character of the world and its stubborn recalcitrance to mastery by knowledge and agency are equally fundamental, primordial features of the way things are. On the one hand, the world is lawful, articulated by alethic modal relations of incompatibility and necessary consequence, so conceptually contentful and graspable. ("To him who looks on the world rationally, the world looks rationally back," Hegel says elsewhere.¹²) It is, in Hegel's terms, thoroughly "mediated." On the other hand, it is shot through with brute immediacy, which impinges on thought through perception. Kant, following the empiricist tradition, conceives the task of conceptualizing sensuous immediacy as an uncompletable, infinite task. For him, sensuous immediacy is conceptually inexhaustible. There is no aspect of what you see when you look at the palm of your hand that you cannot express in a perceptual judgment. But no matter how many such judgments you make, you will never run out of new, as yet unexpressed judgments that would codify genuine features of what you see. One of Hegel's most original ideas is his understanding of the sense in which the immediacy of objective being outruns what can be captured conceptually in subjective thought, not in terms of its necessary *inexhaustibility* by empirical *judgments*, but in terms of the necessary *instability* of determinate empirical *concepts*.

For Hegel, the experience of error requires not just the revision of *beliefs* (doxastic commitments) but also of *meanings*—the concepts or conceptions that articulate empirical judgments. If my conception acid includes as circumstances of appropriate application tasting sour and as appropriate consequences of application turning litmus paper red, then if I run across something that tastes sour and turns litmus paper blue, I will find myself with commitments that are incompatible by my own lights. The world, it

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seems, will not let me have that conception of *acid*, because it commits me to consequences that do not in fact follow in the objective world. In response to registered anomalies, I might need to revise not just my doxastic commitments, but also my broadly inferential commitments concerning what is incompatible with what and what follows from what. In fact Hegel (in striking contrast to Kant) thinks that there is and could *in principle* be no set of determinate empirical concepts that when *correctly* applied to things (according to the normative circumstances and consequences of application defining those concepts) will not eventually lead to the undertaking of incompatible commitments articulated by those concepts, and hence to an experience of error. This is his way of registering immediacy as an irreducible, ineliminable aspect of determinate objective being, and hence of determinate thought about it.

The manifestation of stubborn, residual immediacy in thought is the inevitability of the experience of error. Every recollectively vindicated, rationally harmonious constellation of commitments achieved along the way is fragile, precarious, and temporary—doomed eventually to be riven by incompatibility and unmasked as presenting one more appearance of a reality that is thereby shown to be elusive. Such a view licenses the fallibilist meta-induction. Every previously adopted view has been found wanting—indeed, incoherent—so the way things are presently taken to be, and every way they will be taken to be in the future, also will turn out to misrepresent them. On such a view, experience would seem to be a skeptical “path of despair,” as Hegel puts it.

This is not the conclusion Hegel was aiming at. The *Introduction* starts off the book by insisting that we must not endorse a semantics that makes the achievement of genuine knowledge unintelligible in principle. And what becomes of the conceptual realism that was supposed to match the contents of commitments in thought with those of facts in the world, at least when all goes well? Holding on to hylomorphic conceptual realism while accepting that every constellation of determinately conceptually contentful commitments is doomed to be found to be incoherent (to include incompatible ones) would seem to yield the conclusion that the objective world itself is incoherent—“inconsistent.” Hegel sometimes puts his own claims in ways that invite such a reading.

Hegel presents the tension between the ineluctability of error and the realistic possibility of genuine knowledge as not only a destructive, but also a

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productive one. Both express valid perspectives on what is always at once both the experience of error and the way of truth. The important thing is not to seize exclusively—and so one-sidedly—on either aspect, but to understand the nature of the process as one that necessarily shows up from *both* perspectives. It is of the essence of the historical process of experience to afford both retrospective and prospective temporal perspectives on it. Looking back, from the vantage point of each recollectively vindicated constellation of commitments resulting from the repair of acknowledged incompatibility, one sees unbroken epistemic expressive progress culminating in the achievement of genuine knowledge of truths, as construed by bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism. Looking forward, one sees the inevitable decay of each such beautiful harmony by the unavoidable advent of commitments incompatible with one another by their own lights, and the initiation of new trifold episodes of the experience of error. The retrospective point of view, recollectively producing by rational reconstruction an expressively progressive tradition in which what was implicit (*an sich*) becomes explicit for consciousness, makes visible the sense in which subjective thought can genuinely grasp the objective world: how things can be for consciousness what they are in themselves. The prospective point of view focuses on the ruptures occasioned by the disparities between successive recollective reconstructions, as what is endorsed by one is rejected by a later one. It makes visible the sense in which the immediacy of actual being, reflected in sensuous immediacy, inevitably outruns what is captured by any determinate conceptual (mediated) structure, inferentially articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence. We have seen that one of Hegel's animating ideas is that the independence of immediacy (its distinctive authority over structures of mediation) is manifested in its role as a principle of instability, as providing a normative demand for change, for both rejection and further development of each constellation of determinate concepts and commitments articulated by them. The independence of mediation (its distinctive authority over immediacy) is manifested in all the retrospective recollective vindications of prior constellations of commitments as genuine knowledge, as resulting from the expressively progressive revelation of reality by prior claims to knowledge.

Determinate negation, material incompatibility, is not only the fundamental *conceptual* structure, but also marks the moment of *immediacy* within what is conceptually articulated, whether on the side of being or of thought.

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Immediacy in the realm of being necessarily produces/reveals, via perception of cognitive error and practical failure, the incompatibilities of commitment that normatively oblige the knowing and acting subject to *do* something, to engage in the reparative and recollective phases of experience. The forward-looking obligation to repair acknowledged incompatibilities of commitment acknowledges error and the inadequacy of its conceptions. The backward-looking recollective obligation to rationalize as expressively progressive previous, now superseded, repairs and recollections institutes knowledge, truth, and determinate concepts whose incompatibilities and consequences track those articulating (in a different modal key) the objective world. Acknowledging this obligation by constructing retrospective expressively progressive recollective narratives is the form of Reason's march through history. It is what "looking on the world rationally" consists in.

The recollective process is also what Hegel calls "giving contingency the form of necessity." Objective immediacy, what brutally is, shows up cognitively (becomes something for consciousness, is expressed) as sensuous immediacy in the deliverances of commitments by perception. The "form of necessity" is a *normative* form. ("Necessary," "notwendig," for Kant means "in accordance with a rule. That is why it has for him two species: natural necessity, articulated by alethic modal relations, and practical necessity, articulated by deontic normative relations.) The intrusions of commitments arrived at noninferentially in perception give rise to anomalies through engendering incompatibilities. Giving those eruptions the form of necessity is incorporating them into an expressively progressive recollective narrative that exhibits them as the agents whereby the true contents of concepts are gradually revealed and become more explicit.

So a version of Kant's evenhandedness regarding the cognitive contributions of the faculties of understanding and sensibility is eventually reached within Hegel's more comprehensive rationalist order of metaphysical and semantic explanation, in the form of the equilibrium of retrospective and prospective perspectives on the process that is experience. A common caricature has Hegel, in a simple-minded rationalist way, trying to do with concepts alone what Kant does by dividing the labor between the discursive and the sensible. The real story is much more complicated and interesting.

Understanding the experiential process, which comprises both what shows up when that process is viewed retrospectively and what shows up when it is

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viewed prospectively, so as to see truth and error as equally essential, complementary aspects of it—as two sides of one coin—requires reconceptualizing both truth and determinateness. The key in each case is to understand them not as properties, states, or relations that can be instantiated at a single time, but as structural features of enduring experiential processes. This is making the shift between the static modern metaconceptual structure Hegel calls “Verstand” and the dynamic successor metaconceptual structure he calls “Vernunft.” According to the categories of *Verstand* as articulated by Kant, for instance, the understanding has available to it a stock of concepts that are determinate, in that it is already settled in advance what manifolds of intuition they can successfully synthesize. What is recognizably a cognate *Verstand* conception of determinateness shows up in Frege as the requirement that concepts fix extensions, in the sense of determining, for every possible object, whether that object does or does not fall under the concept. The view is that fixed, permanent truths can be formulated using concepts that are determinate in this sense, and that progress in knowledge consists in endorsing more and more such truths, and rejecting more and more falsehoods formulated in terms of those same determinate concepts. By contrast, the metaconceptual standpoint of *Vernunft* focuses on the malleability of concepts. In the toy example of an experience of error mentioned earlier, a subject finds herself with commitments incompatible by her own lights because she endorses a concept of acid that includes tasting sour as a sufficient reason for applying the concept, and turning litmus paper red as a necessary consequence of its application. Immediate perceptual experience of a liquid that tastes sour and turns litmus paper blue precipitates a crisis. While either of the perceptual judgments might be relinquished, progress can consist in amending the content attributed to the concept. Perhaps only substances that both taste sour and combine with metals to form salts should count as acids. Insofar as this emendation is successful, progress is made in that the subject deploys concepts that better track what really follows from what in the objective world. The experience of error obliges not only change of belief, but change of meaning.

The metaconceptual move that takes us from *vorstellen* to *begreifen* (*Verstand* to *Vernunft*) is the replacement of the model of experience as *representation*, an external relation between independently specifiable realms of representations and representeds, confronting each other across a gulf, by a model of

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experience as *expression*. This is an internal process of development whereby each single content, retrospectively recollectively identifiable as persisting throughout the process of its development, shows up originally in implicit form and is gradually expressed or unfolds, becoming available in ever more explicit form. Experience is the process whereby the determinate, and so mediated contents implicit in immediacy come to appear as explicitly mediated. Representational relations take their explanatorily subsidiary place as arising from one aspect of the activity of developing conceptual contents.

The residue of traditional *Verstand* ways of thinking about cognitive progress that consists in understanding experience as progressive insofar as it asymptotically approaches objective facts and relations of incompatibility and consequence is, according to the more capacious *Vernunft* picture, one-sided and incomplete. It results from appreciating only the retrospective-recollective perspective on experience, which underwrites talk of “facts” (true claims) and “what really follows from (excludes) what” (objective consequences and incompatibilities) from within each vindicating recollective rational reconstruction. Experience is indeed the royal road of truth and knowledge—but it is not that alone. Taking into account also the prospective perspective on experience, which focuses on the fragility and necessarily temporary character of any and every set of doxastic and inferential commitments, requires thinking of truth and determinateness as features of the process of experience, rather than as goals it asymptotically approaches. Experience is the truth-process. And it is the process of *determining* conceptual contents. It is expressively progressive, in the sense that the retrospective-recollective perspective shows it to be genuinely revelatory of reality. That experiential process *both* institutes (on the subjective side) and discovers (on the objective side) conceptually articulated contents, and so truths, that are determinate in the Kant-Frege *Verstand* sense (in its recollective phase) *and* engenders their dissolution in the discovery of residual error.

The comprehensive view that encompasses both what shows up as progressive from the retrospective-recollective perspective and what shows up as disruptive and erroneous from the prospective perspective (corresponding to different phases of the process of experience) is summarized in a central passage from the *Preface*:

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[T]his whole movement constitutes what is positive [in it] and its truth. This truth therefore includes the negative also, what would be called the false, if it could be regarded as something from which one might abstract. The evanescent itself must, on the contrary, be regarded as essential, not as something fixed, cut off from the True, and left lying who knows where outside it, any more than the True is to be regarded as something on the other side, positive and dead. Appearance is the arising and passing away that does not itself arise and pass away, but is “in itself,” and constitutes the actuality and the movement of the life of truth. [PG 47]

“Appearance” here is the phenomena, the world as it shows up for consciousness, in the form of conceptual contents articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence, which are endorsed by the knowing, acting subject of the cycle of cognition and action that is the process of experience. Although each such phenomenon is unmasked as erroneous, as an *appearance* that in some ways *misrepresents* reality, the recollective phase of experience also reveals each such constellation of commitments to be an appearance *of* a noumenal reality (what things are in themselves) represented by it, visible as having been all along implicit in it, gradually but inexorably emerging into greater explicitness. The passage continues with one of the most justly famous images of the whole book:

The True is thus the Bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose. Judged in the court of this movement, the single shapes of Spirit do not persist any more than determinate thoughts do, but they are as much positive and necessary moments, as they are negative and evanescent. In the whole of the movement, seen as a state of repose, what distinguishes itself therein, and gives itself particular existence, is preserved as something that *recollects* itself [sich erinnert]. [PG 47]

In interpreting this allegory, it is important to keep in mind the two levels of concepts I have claimed are being considered. The surface topic is “shapes of Spirit,” various forms exhibited by the normativity articulating the thinkings

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and doings of self-conscious subjects, traditional, modern, and beyond. This is one of the places where Hegel explicitly marks that, besides thoughts and concepts at this categorial metalevel, he is also addressing the nature and evolution of ground-level determinate thoughts and concepts. A characteristic feature of the “pragmatist semantic” reading I have been presenting here is “semantic descent”: focusing on what we are supposed to learn about the use and content of these ordinary empirical and practical “determinate” concepts and commitments. Here the partygoers participating in the movable feast are those commitments: doxastic, practical, and inferential—in the broad sense that articulates conceptual content and so includes commitments concerning what is materially incompatible with (“determinately negates”) what. The revel is the process of experience. What matters about the image of their drunkenness is its picturing of the restless, woozy jostling and elbowing of each other as different contents of potential commitments that are incompatible with each other in the company of the others already on board seek a place at the table. Those that are forced out are immediately replaced by others, so the party continues, though with a shifting cast. The crucial contribution to the festivities that was made by the departed members, those who at some earlier point slipped insensible beneath the table, is still “preserved as recollected,” in the story the later revelers tell about how they got where they are.

This recollective activity establishes the relation between a sequence of phenomena (appearances, senses, representings) and noumena (reality, referents, representeds) in which the latter shows up twice: both as the current constellation of explicitly endorsed conceptual contents in which the rationally reconstructed sequence culminates and also as having been all along implicit in and normatively governing that sequence, by serving as the standard for assessing the expressive success of all of its members. It is because the account grounds the semantic *relations* between senses and referents, representings and representeds, in this recollective *activity* of the experiencing subject that it deserves to be thought of as offering a *pragmatist semantics*.

Conceptual idealism (the *begreifen* that comprehends *vorstellen*) claims both that that semantic, representational relation is to be understood only expressively, in terms of recollective activity, and that it is actually produced or instituted by that activity. The first is a sense-dependence claim, and the

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second is a reference-dependence claim. (What both address is representational relations between senses and referents.) The distinctive kind of doing that is experience for Hegel is, in its reparative and recollective phases, shaping and determining the conceptual contents the subject endorses at the end of each tripartite episode. In that sense it is making or producing conceptions (conceptual contents)—for instance, of acids as what both taste sour and combine with metals to produce salts. This is one sense of “determining conceptual contents”: determining as making up. But the recollective process essentially includes a commitment to having *found* what it in this sense makes. It is a process of *discovery* of what has according to it all along been being expressed and represented, first less and then more adequately, by the sequence of always partly erroneous constellations of commitments in the expressively progressive trajectory retrospectively recollectively rationally reconstructed. This is another sense of “determining conceptual contents”: determining as finding out.

That it is a finding rather than a making is an essential, constitutive commitment even of the jurisprudential species of recollection, which develops and determines legal concepts that are not empirical concepts, in that they are not controlled by perceptually immediate (in the sense of noninferentially elicited) applications of other legal concepts. To use an example of Frege’s, though we might progressively redraw the boundaries of the North Sea, we are not producing the thing itself by doing that. We produce it at most *as* the North Sea, *as* what is picked out by that concept. Repair of an anomaly and its recollective vindication produce new conceptions, articulated by deontic normative relations of material incompatibility and consequence. But the result of those activities as such purports to find alethic modal forms of those relations in the objective world being represented. In this hylomorphic sense, the conceptual contents consciousness finds in the world are just those that it has recollectively made. Conceptual idealism asserts that when, as self-conscious in the sense of being conscious of itself *as* conscious, consciousness distinguishes between its certainty and truth, between what things are for it and what they are in themselves, between appearance and reality, representings and representeds, it is neither alienating itself from itself nor acknowledging a confrontation with something alien to it. Its *finding out* how things really are is a distinctive, *sui generis* kind of active recollective *making* of that distinction, which is essential to consciousness as

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such, through its experience. The world as it is in itself *as* distinct from how it is for consciousness is not a brute other, but in that distinctive sense the product of its own recollective activity in experience. (This is not a reference-dependence claim.) In this sense consciousness finds only what it has made—and not only made findable. In this sense, it sees itself in the objects of its knowledge, even insofar as they transcend that knowledge.

One might be tempted to object that the recollective phenomenological story at most tells us about what activity institutes the semantic representational relation between what things are *for* consciousness and what they are *in* themselves as that relation practically shows up *to* consciousness. And the thought would be that we want rather to know what that semantic representational relation is objectively, in itself. This is a question at the metalevel. The response is that the *begrifflich-Vernunft* recollective story makes explicit how the institution of semantic representational relations by reparative-recollective reconstructions really works, in itself. And the story is that claims of this form are vindicated by retrospective recollective rational reconstructions of the process by which we found out that this is how things really work (in this case, how consciousness really works). That is exactly the metalevel story Hegel tells, in the form of a phenomenology of “shapes of *Geist*.”

VII. Normativity and Recognition

The semantic story about how to understand both how facts as true thinkables are genuinely knowable and how the authority of facts over thought is manifested in the in-principle instability and untenability of every determinate conception of them is also a pragmatic story about the reciprocal relations of authority and responsibility that relate normative attitudes and normative statuses. The attitude-dependence of normative statuses is articulated by understanding normative statuses as instituted by reciprocal recognitive attitudes. The retrospective recollective perspective fills in the countervailing status-dependence of normative attitudes, by exhibiting the concepts that determine the statuses as the culminating phase of an expressively progressive tradition of ever more adequate conceptions normatively governed by the facts they reveal. The prospective disruptive perspective fills in the status-

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dependence of normative attitudes, by exhibiting each conception as inevitably failing adequately to express the objective concepts articulating the facts, which serve as the normative standards for assessing the correctness of the various conceptions. In this way, justice is done to the attitude-transcendence of normative statuses: the way what a subject is really committed to goes beyond anyone's attitudes, beyond what that subject acknowledges and what others attribute.

Because the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses on the normative pragmatic side of the subject in this way mirror the semantic relations between what things are for consciousness and what they are in themselves, understanding Hegel's *begrifflich Vernunft*-structured historical biperspectival account of the relations between subjective conceptions and objective concepts decisively moves us beyond the *alienation* he diagnoses as characteristic of modernity. For the challenge he sees us facing is how to hold on to modernity's defining insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses while reachieving the ancient *sittlich* appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes. That is what the pragmatist semantics of conceptual idealism shows us how to do. The truth that shall set us free is truth understood as a vast Bacchanalian revel with not a soul sober, in which no sooner does one member of the party fall insensible beneath the table than his place is taken by another. For this semantic account explains how normative statuses can at once be instituted by (a tradition of) normative attitudes and also transcend those attitudes, exerting authority by both serving as a normative standard for assessments of the correctness of those attitudes and being what the attitudes reconstructed as expressively progressive are exhibited as subjunctively sensitive to.

Fully to appreciate Hegel's resolution of the challenge set by alienation from norms—the loss of intelligibility of their binding force—that results from modernity's recognition that those norms are instituted by subjective attitudes requires further attention to the fine structure of his account of how attitudes institute normative statuses that transcend and exert authority over those attitudes. The context in which the problem of how to understand this most pointedly arises for Hegel, and which provides the raw materials he re-assembles for his own account, is Kant's autonomy model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes. The strong version of the Enlightenment insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses is the

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idea that normative statuses are *instituted by* normative attitudes. It is not just that there are no normative statuses of authority and responsibility except in a context where people *take* each other to have authority and *hold* each other responsible. The thought is that such attitudes of attributing and acknowledging responsibility and authority actually *produce* those statuses. Normative statuses are creatures of normative attitudes.

Kant implements an especially clear version of this thought. For Kant thinks that discursive subjects can *make* themselves responsible by *taking* themselves to be responsible. Indeed, on his understanding of normative bindingness, one is genuinely *normatively* bound only by commitments one has laid down for oneself, rules one has bound *oneself* by. (Some commitments turn out to be categorial—to explicate the structure of rational commitment as such—and so to be implicit in undertaking any determinate commitments.) For Kant, concepts are rules that determine what one makes oneself responsible for by applying them, whether doxastically in judgment or practically in acting intentionally. The content of the concept determines what commitment one has undertaken, what normative status one has acquired, by adopting the attitude of acknowledging it.

Hegel notices two potential problems with an account of this shape. First, though it is easy to think of autonomy as an *ability* possessed by rational knowers and agents—the ability to bind themselves by norms—it is a distinctively *normative* ability. In fact, it is a kind of *authority*. To treat someone as a rational being is to attribute to her the *authority* to bind herself by her attitudes, to become responsible or committed (subject to normative assessment) by acknowledging responsibilities or commitments. This authority is the *dignity* of rational subjects, and Kant takes it that other rational subjects have a duty or obligation to acknowledge and attribute that authority. That is the duty to *respect* their autonomy. But he does not take it that the authority that is autonomy is itself instituted by the attitudes of those who respect that normative status. The authority that is autonomy and the responsibility on the part of others to respect that authority are normative statuses that are not understood as instituted by normative attitudes. These normative metastatuses are brutally taken just to be part of what it is to be a rational normative subject, and not further accounted for. That the Kantian account has this structure might make it easier to retain a version of the status-dependence of normative attitudes, on which the premodern tradi-

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tion focused. But that advantage is bought at the cost of not fully respecting the strong version of the modern insight into the attitude-dependence of all normative statuses.

A more serious issue concerns the *contents* of the attitudes that institute commitments according to the autonomy model. Those commitments, in judgment and intention, have determinate contents only insofar as the subject has available concepts with such contents. The model says that it is up to me whether I am committed—for instance, to the coin’s being copper. But if the relations of material incompatibility and consequence that articulate the concept copper I have applied in undertaking the commitment are *also* up to me, then I have undertaken no determinate commitment at all. As Wittgenstein says: “If whatever is going to seem right to me is right, that only means that here we can’t talk about ‘right.’” [*PI* §258] Concepts with determinate contents serve as normative standards for assessing whether the subject who applies them has fulfilled the rational responsibilities undertaken thereby—has acknowledged incompatibilities and drawn appropriate conclusions. Hegel wants to know how it is that the subject has access to such determinately contentful normative standards. If they cannot be the products of the attitudes of the one who applies them in judgment, where do they come from? He does not find an adequate answer in Kant.

One of the master ideas of the interpretation of Hegel developed in this work is that a principal task of the *Phenomenology* is to explain the advent of determinately contentful concepts: their nature and the process of experience that not only applies but institutes them. That is what makes this a “semantic” reading. The trouble with the Kantian story is that it in effect envisages two different processes, one that *produces* determinate conceptual contents and a different one that then *applies* them in experience. For Kant, all empirical activity, whether cognitive or practical, consists in applying concepts. That is really the only thing Kantian rational subjects can do. So empirical activity presupposes the availability of the determinately contentful concepts whose application it consists in. Determining the contents of those concepts happens somewhere else, offstage. Once the conceptual enterprise is up and running, making judgment possible in the first place, Kantian judgments of reflection can form new concepts from old ones. But the institution of determinately contentful concepts generally is a precondition of experience, not a product of it. Hegel, by contrast, offers an account

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of experience as at once instituting and applying determinately contentful concepts.

For these two reasons, both because it takes the crucial normative meta-statuses as not instituted by attitudes and because it unduly separates the institution of determinate conceptual contents from their empirical application, Hegel cannot just take over Kant's autonomy story about the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes. But he does find in Kant's account all the raw materials he needs for his successor account. The leading idea of that account is that instituting normative statuses requires cognitive attitudes that are *symmetrical, reciprocal, or mutual*.

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. [PG 184; emphasis added]

It is this symmetrical cognitive constellation of basic normative attitudes and statuses that he refers to in the very next sentence as "the pure Notion of recognition, of the duplicating of self-consciousness in its oneness." It is the basic structure of robust general recognition, in which suitably socially complemented cognitive attitudes institute statuses of cognitive authority, their normative subjects, and the dyadic community that consists of normative subjects who actually reciprocally recognize and are recognized by each other. "The elaboration of the concept of this spiritual unity within its doubling presents us with the movement of *recognition*." [PG 178]

Recognizing others is practically taking or treating them as the subjects of normative attitudes and statuses. More specifically, in the model, it is the attitude of attributing the status of authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes, when those attitudes are suitably complemented. This is a version of the sort of authority that is Kantian autonomy, differing in understanding the constellation of attitudes that can institute (actualize otherwise virtual) statuses as socially mediated rather than individually immediate. Adopting cognitive attitudes in this sense is applying to the one recognized an articulated normative concept of a self. It is consciousness of a self *as* a self. The recognizing consciousness also has that concept applied to it; it is a recog-

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nizing self *for* a recognizing self. But the self it is a self for, the one that is conscious of it as a self is not itself, but the recognized-recognizing other self. The self-consciousness that is instituted and actualized for the recognizing-and-recognized individuals making up the recognitive dyad is a property they have *as* a recognitive dyad. It is only secondarily and as a result that it is a property of each individual. Hegel refers to the recognitive community of recognizing-and-recognized individual normative subjects as “Spirit” [Geist].

“Independence” is in the model *authority*: the authority of the several recognitive subjects. It is not *immediate* authority (independence), but authority that is socially *mediated* by the attitudes of others, who attribute it in recognizing the independent normative subject *as* authoritative. “Freedom” is Hegel’s term for the symmetrical recognitive constellation that integrates immediacy as the actuality of attitudes with their social mediation (through the requirement of suitable complementation of attitudes for their institutional authority). Hegel’s idea is that when recognitive attitudes are symmetrical, when each party attributes to the other the authority to institute by their attitudes both responsibilities on their own part and authority on the other’s part, then genuine normative statuses are instituted.

In the mutual recognition model, authority and responsibility are coordinate and complementary. It is entirely up to me whom I recognize: to whom I attribute the authority to institute normative statuses by their attitudes, when those attitudes are suitably complemented by those to whom they attribute them. In doing so, though, I make myself responsible to those I do recognize. For while it is up to me in that same sense (I have the authority) to acknowledge commitments (responsibilities) on my own part, it is not in the same sense up to me whether I succeed in *making* myself responsible by *so taking* myself to be responsible. My acknowledgment of a commitment, my claim of authority, yield actual statuses of responsibility and authority only if those statuses are also attributed to me by those I have granted the authority to do so, by recognizing them. Nothing but attitudes are necessary (or sufficient) to institute genuine normative statuses. But on the Hegelian recognitive model such normative statuses are understood as essentially *social* statuses. It is *our* attitudes—my attitudes *and* the attitudes of those I recognize and who recognize me, a recognitive community—that institute normative statuses. My attitudes play an essential role in determining what

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authority and responsibility I have, but I cannot make myself authoritative or responsible all on my own.

It is this feature that makes intelligible how, by my attitudes of acknowledgment and recognition, I can bind myself by norms that are *not* simply a matter of my attitudes—so that it is *not* the case that “whatever seems right to me is right,” in which case any norm governing assessments of right or wrong would accordingly drop out of the picture. It is up to me whether I use the term “copper” to express my claim, and so claim that the coin is copper. But the boundaries of the commitment I have succeeded in undertaking thereby, what is incompatible with it and what its consequences are, is administered by those I have granted that authority by recognizing them as metallurgical experts. On Hegel’s account, the distinction between force and content, between the attitude I express and the determinately contentful norm I thereby bind myself by, is practically enforced by a *social* division of labor. It is administered by different bearers of authority and responsibility. My authority is balanced by that of the recognitive community instituted by our reciprocal recognitive attitudes. Each of us is responsible to all the others for the constitution of that community, and of the normative statuses (including normative selfhood) that are instituted by our reciprocal attitudes. That is how the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and the status-dependence of normative attitudes are reconciled.

At this point one might ask: But what of the process of experience, and the crucial role in it played by the retrospective-recollective institution of an expressively progressive tradition? The social division of labor in the story about the institution of normative statuses by reciprocal recognitive attitudes is from a temporal point of view horizontal, a matter of relations among contemporaries. The story about experience, in contrast, is essentially historical, temporally vertical, with the crucial relations holding between earlier and later episodes of experience. How do the social and the historical dimensions of Hegel’s story mesh?

The answer is that the social and historical dimensions are intimately related. Both are to be understood in normative terms of recognitive relations of authority and responsibility. So construed, the historical, temporally biperspectival account of how the process of experience institutes representational relations between phenomena and noumena, appearance and reality, senses and referents, and normative attitudes and normative statuses shows

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up as a crucial special case of the social reciprocal recognition model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes. For the triphasic experiential process by which representational relations to determinate conceptual contents are both made and found (considered prospectively and retrospectively, respectively) exhibits the structure of coordinate, reciprocal authority and responsibility characteristic of the institution of normative statuses by mutual recognitive attitudes. The historical process of determining conceptual contents in the *Vernunft* sense is a social recognitive process.

This point emerges most clearly, perhaps, in the institutionalized case of the determination of the contents of legal concepts by the judges who both make and apply common and case law. The norms in that example are laws, which must be determinately contentful in that they must settle what conduct is forbidden and what conduct is required by them (what is incompatible with or necessitated by them). In that forum, there is nothing to institute those norms except the attitudes of the judges, practically expressed in the decisions they make in applying them. That is the sense in which these norms are properly thought of as “judge-made law.” Each judge exercises real authority in each case she is deciding—in applying the legal concepts in question to novel sets of facts, specified in terms of nonlegal concepts. But it is authority constrained by corresponding responsibilities. For the judge’s decision is authoritative only insofar as its authority is recognized by future judges. If they do not treat the case as correctly decided, given law the judge inherited, they will not treat it as having precedential authority for their own decisions. In deciding a case, in applying the legal concepts one way rather than another, the judge is in effect petitioning future judges for recognition, for the authority to determine the content of the normative status, the law, by the attitudes she manifests in applying it that way. Their decision about whether to grant that authority is a decision about the extent to which the judge has been responsible to the authority of prior judges’ decisions as to the proper boundaries of the legal concepts in play. The authority of the “law-making” judge is balanced by responsibility to the applications of prior judges, the content of the norm inherited from them. And the judge is responsible to future judges in that they *hold* that judge responsible *to* the authority of the tradition she inherits. They administer that authority. And of course, no future judge’s decision to treat the current judge’s decision as precedential or

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not is itself finally authoritative. It, too, is responsible to the (equally defeasible) authority of judges of the still further future.

The recollective process is how causes get shaped into reasons. Even if what the judge had for breakfast made her decide as she did—in that the genealogical subjunctive is true that if she had eaten something different, she would have decided differently—a suitable recollective narrative can exhibit the decision as nonetheless *correct*: as a making explicit of some aspects of the content of the law that the recollection exhibits as having been all along implicit. The attitude so caused is exhibited as expressive of a genuine norm, and hence as reason providing for future judges. Recollection is a kind of rationalization. But it is not unconstrained. The authority of a present judge's retrospective rationalization must be recognized by future judges to be more than just an attitude. Though he does not offer an alternative metaphysics of *Vernunft*, I take it that if he could be brought to use such language, Wittgenstein would agree with Hegel that one of the alienating culprits responsible for our inability to hold together the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and the status-dependence of normative attitudes is a deformed, dualism-inducing conception of the relations between reasons and causes.

What is enacted in determining the content of legal concepts this way is recognizably a version of the model of instituting normative statuses by reciprocal cognitive attitudes. At each stage in the determination of the content of legal concepts, the authority of each judge's attitudes over the developing content is balanced by a correlative responsibility to the norm being applied. The normative labor of instituting the norm by applying it is divided between different normative subjects. Authority is real (a normative status, not just an attitude of claiming authority) only insofar as it is recognized. And the authority of the recognizer suitably to complement the attitude of claiming or attributing authority must itself be recognized by others, on pain of demotion from actual to virtual: from status to mere attitude. Both the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and the status-dependence of normative attitudes are in play at every point. For the authority of actual applications over the developing conceptual contents (making law) and the responsibility of such applications to the inherited conceptual contents (finding law) are active throughout. In the process of determining content (in the *sui generis* making/finding sense of "determining"), each generation inherits binding norms. But (seen prospectively) each alters them

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by their attitudes. This is how *we* (in the temporally extended sense) can both be bound by the norms we inherit, looking back, and make the norms, going forward.

VIII. Dimensions of Holism: Identity through Difference

It is worth briefly rehearsing a different path that can be taken through the story told here, emphasizing a common structure that is cumulatively developed in it. One of the big ideas that distinguishes Hegel's thought from that of his predecessors is his commitment to what would come to be called "holism." He talks about it under the heading of a new "speculative" conception of identity. Understood speculatively, identity is not to be contrasted with difference, but is to be thought of as comprising and being articulated by difference. We are to think first of a whole that is what it is, whose identity consists in, its different parts standing in the relations to one another that they do. Then we are to think of the parts themselves as being identified and individuated functionally, by the roles they play in constituting the whole in question. They are not to be thought of as self-standing, in that they are the things they are antecedently to and independently of being related to each other in the way they are in the whole that comprises them. Rather, they are identified and individuated by the functional roles they play in the whole. The parts play different roles in constituting the whole. But we are to think both that those differences are essential to the identity of the whole and that standing in the relations to the other different parts that they do is essential to the identity of each part. For these reasons, Hegel will say that the parts, though different from one another, are identical to one another "in the speculative sense," which is compatible with and depends upon them also being different from one another.

Conceptual structures of this abstract shape—holistic conceptual structures—are ubiquitous in Hegel's thought. He was the first to try to think through, consecutively and rigorously, what is involved in such holistic structures. And there is room for skepticism about whether the general concept is so much as intelligible. How, exactly, is the individuating work done? The whole is identified and individuated by the relations among its parts, and the parts are identified and individuated by their relations to each other in

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forming the whole that they do. There is potentially a chicken-and-egg circularity problem with this specification. Hegel's characterization of such structures as "infinite" and his suggestion that they are to be understood by "traversing the moments" (at the end of *Force and Understanding*), might seem to acknowledge the difficulty without offering much concrete help in addressing it. The battle over Hegel's later reception in *fin de siècle* British Idealism was largely waged over this issue of the intelligibility and usefulness of the idea that "all relations are internal relations." The underlying distinction between internal and external relations was sometimes conveyed by the example of a ladder. The relations between its rails and its rungs are what make it a ladder. It is only by standing in those relations to each other that the bits of wood make up a ladder. By contrast, the relations between the ladder and wall it is leaning up against and the ground it is standing on are external to it. Move it, take it out of those relations, and it remains a ladder and the ladder that it is. Its internal relations are essential to (necessary for) its identity. Its external relations are accidental to (contingent with respect to) its identity. This is the model Quine had in mind when he said (in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism") that meaning is what essence becomes when it is detached from the thing and attached to the word. At the extremes, British Absolute Idealists thought of all relations as internal (Russell's "world as a bowl of jelly") and atomists thought of all relations as external (Russell's "world as a bucket of shot"). Whitehead cited both as united in committing the "fallacy of lost contrast."

But this is not the level of generality at which Hegel's holism should be considered. It is best approached in terms of the various detailed uses Hegel makes of holist structures in his pragmatics and semantics, and in the intricate relations among them. We can begin with his recognitive metaphysics of normativity. Particular biological organisms, individuated by their different desires, adopt recognitive attitudes toward one another. They thereby institute recognitive communities—a kind of whole or universal—of those who are recognized by those they recognize. As members of such communities, as particulars "falling under" such universals, they become more than just the particulars with which we began. They become self-conscious individual normative subjects of statuses of authority and responsibility. The identity of the community is constituted by the recognitive relations among its different members, and those members are the more-than-merely-particular individuals they are by standing in just the recognitive relations

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to others that they do. They are identified and individuated by their recognitive relations to those specifically different from them. Any worries about the circularity of holistically individuated individuals and the universals that characterize them are resolved by the role of the orrectically individuated particular organisms who recognitively bootstrap themselves from the realm of *Natur* to that of *Geist*. (I have argued elsewhere that a crucial role played by immediacy in mediated conceptual structures is precisely to provide antecedently individuated vehicles for holistically defined significances.¹³)

But we have seen that this simple story of the institution of norms by mutual recognition is just the beginning of Hegel's sophisticated metaphysics of normativity. The critique of the Master's practical conception of pure independence, authority without correlative responsibility, shows that these two fundamental normative statuses (aspects of what subjects are in themselves) are holistically related. Authority and responsibility are reciprocally sense-dependent and reference-dependent on one another. For one's commitment to be determinately contentful, the authority to undertake such commitments must be balanced by the authority of others to hold one responsible for them.

Unpacking the recognitive model a bit further has showed that the two fundamental normative attitudes of attributing and acknowledging responsibility and authority—which express the difference in social perspective between what subjects are for others and what they are for themselves—are also holistically related to one another. They, too, are reciprocally sense-dependent and globally reference-dependent on one another. One cannot understand one except as part of a whole that includes the relations of these different attitudes toward one another, and subjects cannot have the capacity to adopt one practical capacity unless they have the capacity to adopt the other. Further, when we look at the normative fine structure of the recognitive process by which normative statuses are instituted by normative attitudes—in particular, when we look at the way the recognitive model grows out of and builds on the basic Kantian normative status of having the authority to commit oneself (make oneself responsible by acknowledging a responsibility)—we see that the various normative attitudes and the various normative statuses are all holistically related to one another, too. Normative statuses are both reciprocally sense-dependent and reciprocally reference-dependent on normative attitudes.

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The recognitive model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes shows very well the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. The converse status-dependence of normative attitudes shows up at several levels. One must have the recognitive authority to hold another responsible in order for one's recognitive attitudes to count as suitably complementary and so able to cooperate in instituting a determinately contentful status. More deeply, for one's acknowledgment or attribution of a responsibility to be determinately contentful, those attitudes must be acknowledgments or attributions of normative statuses with determinate contents. Explicating the status-dependence of normative attitudes in Hegel's metaphysics of normativity requires attention to the *contentfulness* attitudes inherit from the statuses they are attitudes toward.

The semantics implicit in Hegel's normative pragmatics begins with his nonpsychological conception of the conceptual. To be conceptually contentful is to stand in relations of determinate negation (and so of mediation) to other such contentful items. The identity of each conceptual content consists in its relations of exclusive difference (contrariety) to other such contents, and the identity of the Concept that comprises them all is articulated by those relations of exclusive difference between all its component determinate conceptual contents. Here, too, to avoid paradox or regress we should think of immediately distinguishable particulars as bearers or vehicles of these conceptual contents. Those contents can then be thought of as identified and individuated by the relations of material incompatibility and consequence they stand in to other such contents. In discussing the *Perception* chapter we saw how Hegel unpacks what is implicit in this picture of conceptual content to derive a complex, multilayered holistic structure of properties and objects. Already at this point there is a *lot* more metaphysical fine structure to the holistic systems Hegel is considering than are hinted at in the simple-minded summary in terms of identity through difference with which I began. And we saw that *Force and Understanding* both takes the unpacking of holistic structures still further and takes the nature of such structures as an explicit topic. It is here that we get such characteristic specifications as these:

These moments are not divided into two independent extremes offering each other only an opposite extreme: their essence rather consists

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simply and solely in this, that each *is* solely through the other, and what each thus is it immediately no longer is, since it *is* the other. They have thus, in fact, no substance of their own, which might support and maintain them. [PG 141]

[A] *difference* which is no *difference*, or only a difference of what is *self-same*, and its essence is unity. The two distinguished moments both subsist [bestehen]; they are *implicit* and are *opposites in themselves*, i.e. each is the opposite of itself; each has its “other” within it and they are only one unity. [PG 161]

That the simple character of law is infinity means, according to what we have found, a) that it is *self-identical*, but is also in itself *different*; or it is the selfsame which repels itself from itself or sunders itself into two. . . . b) What is thus dirempted [Entzweite], which constitutes the parts . . . exhibits itself as a stable existence . . . but c) through the Notion of inner difference, these unlike and indifferent moments . . . are a *difference* which is no *difference* or only a difference of what is *self-same*, and its essence is unity. . . . The two distinguished moments both subsist; they are *implicit* and are *opposites in themselves*, i.e. each is the opposite of itself; each has its “other” within it and they are only one unity. [PG 161]

At the high level of metaconceptual abstraction at which we can characterize a conceptual structure as “holistic,” then, we see generically the same kind of holism characterizing Hegel’s initial conception of conceptual content that we saw characterize his recognitive conception of relations among normative attitudes and normative statuses. But we also saw that that conception of conceptual content is hylomorphic. Conceptual contents in Hegel’s sense can take two forms, objective and subjective, depending on whether the relations of determinate negation (material incompatibility) that articulate them are construed in alethic modal terms or deontic normative ones—that is, whether their exclusive difference means that it is *impossible* for two properties to be coinstantiated, or two states of affairs both to obtain, or whether it is merely *impermissible* for one subject to acknowledge two corresponding commitments.

The intentional relations between conceptual contents of these two forms (the one articulating subjective thoughts and the other objective states of

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affairs) are the basis of the *representational* dimension of conceptual content: “of”-intentionality rather than the “that”-intentionality articulated by relations of determinate negation. We saw that these representational relations between the two equally holistic forms of conceptual content (representings and representeds, Hegelian senses and referents, phenomena and noumena) are to be understood in terms of the *recollective* phase of experience. The process and practice that is experience in Hegel’s sense has both cognitive and practical dimensions. It inevitably is the experience of error and failure, but it is also the process and the practice whereby conceptual contents are determined and truth discovered. The exercise of recollective rationality reveals determinate conceptual contents and norms with those contents as governing the process of discovering them through experience. It is the practice that articulates at once the status-dependence of normative attitudes crucial to Hegel’s normative pragmatics and the notion of determinate conceptual content central to his semantics, tying them together holistically in a pragmatist account. Recollection in one sense makes, and in another sense finds, holistic interdependences between not only the two forms of conceptual content on the semantic side and the attitudes and statuses on the side of normative pragmatics, but the semantic distinctions and the pragmatic ones. As the origin of the distinction between sense and referent, the holistic interdependences recollection makes visible are not assimilable either to sense-dependence or to reference-dependence. The result is a holistic pragmatist interdependence of pragmatics and semantics. Hegelian holism is a house with many mansions. Hegel is happy to talk about each of the interdependencies it comprises, and about the system of all of them together, as exhibiting the holistic structure of identity through difference he calls “infinity.”

IX. Truth as Subject, *Geist* as Self-Conscious

Like this Conclusion, Hegel’s *Preface* (written after the rest of the book) states some of the largest and most important claims he understands the whole book to entitle him to make. It is not a bit of philosophical argumentation that is supposed to do the entitling. Nor is it more than a minimal explanation of those claims. What we get in the *Preface* are only the minimal articu-

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lations necessary to locate, for one who has mastered the whole work, which features of it are being invoked and labeled. It is valuable for giving us in one place an overview of what Hegel takes himself to have established, a general picture of what he thinks he has accomplished.

The central slogan of the *Preface* is that

everything turns on grasping and expressing the True not only as Substance, but equally as Subject. [PG 17]

Grasping the true is implicitly comprehending it, while expressing it is explicitly comprehending it. The latter involves the use of specifically logical vocabulary, of the sort Hegel deploys in the *Phenomenology*. The centrality of the claim that the True is not only Substance but Subject is indicated by its repetition—it appears with only slight variations in [PG 18], [PG 25], [PG 32], [PG 37], [PG 39], [PG 54], and [PG 65]. Let us look first at “the True.” In [PG 20] we are told that the True is the whole. In this idiom we do not find the opposition between truth and certainty that is in play in the rest of the book. The truth of Spirit’s self-consciousness and its certainty coincide when it knows itself absolutely.

The True . . . is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual. [PG 18]

Here Hegel is talking about the expository process he pursues in the *Phenomenology* of philosophically making explicit what is implicit in ordinary empirical and practical concept-use, by considering the various “shapes of [self-]consciousness” that express different structural categories in terms of which it can be rendered. But he is also talking about the process of experience by which the contents of those concepts are determined and show up as representing how things really are. The recollective phase of each episode of experience places the explicit result in which experience (so far) culminates back at the beginning of the process, as having always all along implicitly governed the development of a constellation of commitments, as the normative standard for assessments of the partial success and failure of each prior

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episode in the process—episodes now rationally reconstructed into an unbroken, cumulative expressive progression. The truth is

the process which begets and traverses its own moments, and this whole movement constitutes what is positive [in it] and its truth. This truth therefore includes the negative also, what would be called the false, if it could be regarded as something from which one might abstract. The evanescent itself must, on the contrary, be regarded as essential, not as something fixed, cut off from the True. [PG 47]

(This is the passage that continues with the metaphor of truth as a Bacchanalian revel with not a soul sober.) It is by comprehending this process as a whole that we are to understand the dual manifestations of the true as substance and as subject.

The role the logical or speculative concept of substance has played in the body of the work is that of what constrains cognition and action, that on which individuals depend or answer to in experience. We have heard about two basic sorts of substance: *natural* substance and *ethical* [sittlich] substance. The first comprises the inorganic and organic aspects of things, as they at once provide an arena within which we actualize and express ourselves, and set standards for successful cognition and action. The second is the norm-governed, norm-instituting recognitive community. The two correspond to what are called, in the terminology Hegel inherits from Kant, natural and practical necessity. (“Necessary” for Kant means “according to a rule.”) We have seen that the two kinds of rules articulating these two kinds of necessity are made explicit in alethic modal and deontic normative vocabulary, respectively.

Representational thinking, *vorstellen*, articulating the metaconceptual categories of *Verstand*, understands both kinds of substance, natural and *geistig*, in terms of “abstract immediacy (the immediacy which barely is).” [PG 32] This is the immediacy of being and the immediacy of thought. Natural substance is construed as confronting thinking substance as an independent constraint on cognition and action. The focus is on external, objective representational *relations* between substances construed as different kinds of immediacy. The first step in overcoming this abstract opposition,

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which threatens to make cognition and action unintelligible, is to see both sorts of substance as involving also a moment of mediation.

Thoughts become fluid when pure thinking, this inner immediacy, recognizes itself as a moment. [PG 33]

[T]he Subject . . . by giving determinateness an existence in its own element supersedes abstract immediacy, i.e. the immediacy which barely is, and thus is authentic substance: that being or immediacy whose mediation is not outside of it but which is this mediation itself. [PG 32]

Mediation is, broadly, inferential articulation. To understand both being and thought as “thoroughly mediated” is to understand them as articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence. Such a conception makes possible “understanding truth as substance,” which is understanding truth as a matter of one identical conceptual *content* taking two *forms*: as fact and as thought. This is *bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism*.

But we have seen that “understanding truth as substance,” in the sense of bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism, is an ultimately one-sided view. It looks at things and thoughts only from the point of view of their conceptual articulation—that is, as mediated. Their surplus nonconceptual immediacy, overflowing containment by any determinate conceptual structure of mediation, is what both alethically necessitates and normatively demands *change* of conception.

[E]*xperience* is the name we give to just this movement, in which the immediate, the unexperienced, i.e. the abstract, whether it be of sensuous being, or only thought of as simple, becomes alienated from itself and then returns to itself from this alienation, and is only then revealed for the first time in its actuality and truth, just as it then has become a property of consciousness also. [PG 36]

What alethic incompatibility (for instance, of properties) on the side of objects implicitly is becomes explicit in the normative demand that subjects resolve and repair incompatible commitments. This internal connection

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between determinate negation (material incompatibility) as an objective relation and practical normative obligations to *do* something, to *change* the contents they cognitively and practically endorse, shows mediation and immediacy to be two sides of one coin. Cashing that metaphor, mediation and immediacy must be understood as two aspects of the *process* of experience. Immediacy manifests itself in the *disparity* between the objective and subjective forms of conceptual content, which is the motor of the process of conceptual development constitutive of the subject.

This is the insight that Hegel invokes under the heading of “understanding the True as subject.”

For mediation is nothing beyond self-moving self-sameness, or is reflection into self, the moment of the “I” which is for itself pure negativity or, when reduced to its pure abstraction, simple becoming. The “I,” or becoming in general, this mediation, on account of its simple nature, is just immediacy in the process of becoming, and is the immediate itself.¹⁴ [PG 21]

The “I,” the self, the subject is identified with the movement, “becoming in general”—that is, experience. This is already Kant’s view, where the subject of experience, what is responsible for its commitments, is identified with the process of synthesizing a constellation of commitments that has the rational unity characteristic of apperception—by practically acknowledging the critical, justificatory, and ampliative rational task responsibilities constitutive of judgment. And it is this process of experience that determines (prospectively and retrospectively, making and finding) conceptual contents.

Determinate thoughts have the “I,” the power of the negative . . . for the substance and element of their existence. [PG 33]

The guiding slogan of the *Preface*,

everything turns on grasping and expressing the True not only as Substance, but equally as Subject, [PG 17]

can be understood in four stages.

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- First, truth is understood as substance. It is understood in terms of an identity relation between natural and normative substance. This is *hylomorphic conceptual realism*: the appearance of a single conceptual content in the two substantial forms of thought and fact.
- Second, truth is understood as subject. This is truth as a feature of the process of experience (The “I” as “becoming,” “the power of the negative”), which encompasses not only the symmetrical relations between substances of the first stage that consists of identity of mediated conceptual content, but also the disparity and disruption of immediacy manifested as error, driving (normatively demanding) the process of determining content.
- Third, a symmetrical relation is discerned between conceiving truth as substance, at the first stage, and conceiving truth as subject, at the second stage. We see that neither can be understood except by means of its relation to the other. The relational conception of truth as substance and the processual conception of truth as normative subject, corresponding to the two modal forms that conceptual content can take, alethic and deontic-normative, are reciprocally sense-dependent. This is *objective idealism*.
- The final stage is the discovery that “substance is in itself or implicitly Subject.” [PG 47]

At this point, it is not just that we must conceive the truth not only as substance but as subject, but must also construe substance as an aspect of subject: as being implicitly what subject is explicitly. We must appreciate an asymmetrical priority of the recollective recognitive process that both constitutes self or subject and determines conceptual contents, over the semantic (including representational) relations between normative and natural substance. For that process *institutes* those relations. This final stage is what I have called “*conceptual idealism*.”

Hegel presents this final, culminating stage in our phenomenological self-consciousness as an “overcoming of otherness” on the part of the knowing and acting subject. That its independence (authority) is constrained by a correlative dependence (responsibility), manifested in a representational (semantic, intentional) relation to an objective world now shows up as a metaphysically unavoidable aspect of the determinate contentfulness of its

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own thoughts. Objective being as substance is understood in terms of the role it plays in the development of the thinking subject, the self. He makes this final stage of self-understanding explicit in a long passage that summarizes the lessons he takes *Geist* to have learned about itself over the course of its development, and wants us, his readers, to learn from his recollective rehearsal of that process.

The disparity which exists in consciousness between the “I” and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the negative in general. . . . Now although this negative appears at first as a disparity between the “I” and its object, it is just as much the disparity of the substance with itself. Thus what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject. [PG 37]

The disparity within natural substance itself is the way its immediacy overflows every constellation of commitments articulated by *Verstand*-determinate conceptual contents, leading to a further episode of the experience of error and normatively demanding of the subject the alteration of its commitments. Those commitments include commitments concerning what is incompatible with what and what is a consequence of what. Changing those is further determining the contents of the concepts in terms of which cognitive and practical commitments are couched. The immediacy of objective being and the instability of every constellation of determinate commitments are two aspects of the same metaphysical matter of fact.

The passage continues:

When it has shown this completely, Spirit [Geist] has made its existence identical with its essence; it has itself for its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy, and the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome. Being is then absolutely mediated; it is a substantial content which is just as immediately the property of the “I,” it is self-like or the Concept [Begriff]. With this the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is concluded.

When, at this fourth stage, it conceives itself in these terms (that is, according to the categories of *Vernunft*), *Geist* becomes for the first time fully and ade-

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quately self-conscious. That is what Hegel means by saying that its existence is identical to its essence. Immediacy is now understood in terms of its role in the process of mediation—that is, the process of conceptualizing it, incorporating how things really are into how things are taken to be. Hegel talks about doing this as “mediating the immediate,” or “giving contingency the form of necessity.” The form of necessity is normative, conceptual form, the form in which it can be seen recollectively as exercising *authority* over the process of determining conceptual contents (the representings responsible to this represented). At this point, we (and *Geist* itself) can see how the determinateness of our very thoughts depends on incorporating natural, immediate contingency into our concepts as part of the process of determining their contents. This is self (truth as subject) overcoming the otherness of natural substance, by seeing the essential role it plays in the development of the self (as a truth process).

And at this point, the status-dependence of normative attitudes has been reinstated, and alienation overcome. Now the immediacy of being is understood in terms of the role it plays in the development of the self, which is the determining of conceptual content. The status-dependence of attitudes—the fact that the determinate content of attitudes depends on (is responsible to, is normatively governed by) how things really are—is seen as a necessary condition of the development of thinking subjects. We have seen that the status-dependence of attitudes—there being a fact of the matter about what a subject is really committed to that transcends what that subject or any other subject *takes* it to be committed to—is a matter of the *determinate contentfulness* of the attitudes. Their conceptual content—what one has committed oneself to by adopting the attitude—is what the attitudes remain responsible to, what exercises authority over them. And we have seen that that determinate contentfulness is intelligible in terms of the process of experience by which conceptual contents are determined. That process of determination shows up prospectively as a determining as *making* determinate (in the Kant-Frege *Verstand* sense) and retrospectively as a *finding out* of what is always already determinate (in the Kant-Frege *Verstand* sense). The first perspective articulates the attitude-dependence of normative statuses, and the second the status-dependence of normative attitudes. So the “overcoming of otherness” is a moving beyond alienation. The status-dependence of attitudes—the fact that the determinate content of attitudes depends on (is responsible to) how things really are—shows itself as a necessary condition of the development of thinking subjects.

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The unalienated, *sittlich*, postmodern age is to be ushered in by the achievement of this final stage of self-consciousness. At this point self-consciousness finally understands what it has been doing all along in mediating immediacy by incorporating it into the content of concepts, thereby giving objective contingency the normative form of necessity. It now comes to realize that the *Verstand-vorstellen* conception of itself as an antecedently determinate normative subject, thinking substance, confronting and only externally representationally related to an alien antecedently determinate objective natural substance, was itself an appearance of the relations between appearance and reality. What it was a one-sided appearance *of* is the process of experience that is the real self. The finally adequate form of self-consciousness understands that the authority (independence) it exercises in cognition and action depends for its determinate contentfulness on being balanced by a coordinate dimension of responsibility to (dependence on) immediate being that manifests itself as the motor of the determining of the conceptual contents that articulate its own thoughts. (Hegel calls this “pure self-identity in otherness.” [PG 54])

The determinateness seems at first to be due entirely to the fact that it is related to an other, and its movement seems imposed on it by an alien power; but having its otherness within itself, and being self-moving, is just what is involved in the simplicity of thinking itself; for this simple thinking is the self-moving and self-differentiating thought. [PG 55]

This realization is a form of self-consciousness, not just of individual self-conscious selves or subjects, but, Hegel says (for instance, in the passage quoted earlier from PG 37) of *Geist* itself. The phenomenology that Hegel recollectively reconstructs for us in his book is not the process of determining ground-level empirical and practical concepts, along with the constellation of commitments they articulate—what he sometimes calls “the Concept.” It is rather the philosophical process of development of the speculative metaconcepts in terms of which we are to understand the ground-level process of experience. The subject here is not an individual knower and agent, but the whole of *Geist*. What is recollected is the “shapes of (self-)consciousness,” in the sense of the categories articulating the constellation of metaconceptual commitments that constitute *Geist*’s understanding of itself.

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What it arrives at explicitly at the end of the process recounted in the *Phenomenology of Geist*, and so recollects as having been implicit all along (what he calls “Absolute Knowing”), is a set of “speculative,” in Hegel’s sense logical, metaconcepts adequate for expressing explicitly how experience, consciousness, self-consciousness, and rational agency—all the aspects of normative, *geistig*, activity—really work.

It is one of the guiding ideas of the present reading of the *Phenomenology* that the book should be read at these two levels. It is a phenomenological recollection (and so rational reconstruction as expressively progressive) of the stages in the development of the self-consciousness of *Geist*, and of the philosophical concepts (such as “determinate negation,” “immediacy”/“mediation,” “in-itself”/“for consciousness,” “independence”/“dependence”) that articulate that self-consciousness. According to this reading, these are *metaconcepts*, whose distinctive expressive role is to make explicit the use and content of the ordinary empirical and practical concepts (Hegel’s “determinate concepts” expressing “determinate thoughts”¹⁵) deployed in nonphilosophical cognition and practical agency. I take it that the *point* of developing the philosophical metaconcepts is just to explain how things work at the ground level. This is what I have called the strategy of “semantic descent.” Adopting this strategy, I see Hegel as further developing Kant’s insight that in addition to concepts deployed in describing and explaining empirical goings-on and deliberating about and assessing practical doings, there are concepts whose expressive role is, rather, to make explicit fundamental features of the framework that makes possible description and explanation, deliberation and assessment. We can understand why both figures expend most of their attention and effort on the categorial metaconcepts. Their discovery is one of the transformative ideas that usher in this period in philosophy. But their excited exploration of the possibilities opened up by considering this new sort of concept can obscure what is of at least equal importance: what Kant and Hegel use those newly discovered categorial metaconcepts to say about the use and content of ordinary ground-level concepts.

Confusion can arise, however, about which of the two levels Hegel is referring to when he makes certain claims. Does he mean, at a particular point, to be talking about the empirical and practical experience of individual self-conscious subjects and the concepts they deploy, or about the

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experience that shapes *Geist's* understanding of itself and the development of the metaconcepts used to make sense of ground-level experience? To what extent do the two stories run along in parallel, and to what extent do they diverge? Here I think two large-scale interpretive issues arise that Hegel does not explicitly address, and that his readers have by and large also not addressed. One concerns the relations between the sense in which ordinary knowers and agents are self-conscious and the sense in which *Geist* as a whole is self-conscious. The other concerns analogies and disanalogies between the process of development and what is required to understand ordinary ground-level empirical and practical concepts, on the one hand, and the process of development and what is required to understand categorial speculative or logical metaconcepts on the other.

As to the first of these issues, there is an obvious tension between Hegel's treating *Geist* as a whole as a self-conscious normative self or subject, and his social-recognitive theory of what self-consciousness and selfhood (being a normative subject) consists in. After all, one of his big ideas is that self-consciousness in the sense that matters for sapience is a normative, and hence a social phenomenon—not something that happens between the ears of an individual, but something that arises as the product of individuals' social-practical recognitive attitudes toward other members of the community and the social-practical recognitive attitudes adopted by those others in turn. Self-consciousness is the normative social status of someone who is *reciprocally* recognized: recognized by those she recognizes.

But how is *Geist* as a whole supposed to qualify as self-conscious in this essentially *social* sense? I rehearsed above a reading of Hegel's claim that when it achieves fully adequate self-consciousness, consciousness is no longer "burdened by relation to an other" in the form of a wholly independent objective natural world, with thought and being conceived as antecedently and independently determinate substances standing to one another in representational relations that are purely external to those substances. In this sense, no doubt, for Hegel *Geist* as a whole is correspondingly not "burdened by relation to an other" in the form of the objective world. But what matters here is not intentional relations between subjects and objects but social recognitive relations of subjects to other subjects. Surely in this social sense, *Geist* is not related to any other comparable subject. Are the other subjects to which it is recognitively related—in virtue of which relations it can qualify

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as self-conscious in Hegel's sense—then the individual normative subjects whose attitudes and practices *Geist* comprises? I suppose one might try out such a line, but it will be hard to tell a story according to which the recognitive relation *Geist* stands in to individual *geistig* normative subjects is the *same* as the recognitive relation they stand in to each other, or to it.

I take it that the right answer to this question is set out above. The structure of authority and responsibility exhibited by the *historical* development of *Geist*, shaped prospectively by the disruptive phases of the experience of error and practical failure and retrospectively by recollective rational reconstruction of an expressively progressive tradition is recognizably a structure of reciprocal recognition—albeit a distinctive one. At any point in its development, *Geist* as a whole stands in recognitive relations to its past and future time slices, just as judges at common law do to past and future judges. Each is recognized as having a certain sort of authority in instituting the status claimed by the current incarnation: the status of being responsible to the past and authoritative over the future. Those current attitudes institute actual statuses of responsibility and authority only insofar as they are suitably complemented by the attitudes of those recognized as having the authority to do so. Although the temporal ordering is asymmetrical and cumulative, the recognitive relations are reciprocal and symmetrical in that *every* stage stands in the *same* recognitive relations to *its* past and future, and *every* stage also eventually plays the role of past and future to *other* stages. Individual normative subjects stand both in horizontal social reciprocal-recognitive relations to their contemporaries and in vertical social reciprocal-recognitive relations of the distinctively historical species to their predecessors and successors in those recognitive communities. *Geist* as a whole stands *only* in social recognitive relations of the vertical historical species, for it has no contemporaries to which it could be related recognitively in the horizontal social sense. That is a specific difference between the sense in which *Geist* is a self-conscious subject of normative statuses and the sense in which individual knowers and agents are self-conscious subjects of normative statuses. But they share the generic sense of normative selfhood as instituted by relations of reciprocal recognition.

As to the second issue about the relations between ground-level “determinate” concepts and metalevel “speculative,” “logical,” or philosophical concepts, as I have told the story Hegel certainly does take them to be different

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kinds of concepts. I have interpreted that distinction in terms of an understanding of categorial concepts in Kant's framework-articulating sense as *metaconceptual* concepts: concepts concerning the use and content of ground-level concepts. It is part of that, potentially controversial, hermeneutic commitment that I see Hegel as assimilating determinate and speculative concepts in one crucial respect. The contents of both kinds of concepts develop by experiential processes of the same biperspectival sort, characterized prospectively by disruptive experiences of incompatible commitments and their repair, and retrospectively by healing recollective vindications of those repairs by rationally reconstructing them as the culmination of a process that takes the form of the step-by-step emergence into explicitness of what becomes visible as having been all along implicit in the partially mistaken, partially revelatory constellations of prior commitments.

So it is of the essence of this reading to agree with Hegel both that there is an important distinction between determinate and speculative concepts, and that they are alike in the structure of the process by which both concepts of those two kinds and the constellations of commitments expressed by means of them develop. But Hegel couples those insights with two further commitments concerning how the two sorts of concepts are alike and different of which it seems to me we should be more critical. First, he takes it that because they both develop their contents in generically the same way, by processes having the same general structure, it follows that for concepts of *both* kinds the *only* way to specify or convey their contents is by a retrospective rational reconstruction of a tradition of their uses. This is how he proceeds for philosophical terminology in the *Phenomenology*, with a tradition reconstructed from actual precedent philosophical commitments, and in the *Science of Logic*, with a tradition reconstructed from merely possible antecedents—a way the final concepts *could* have been developed. It is also how he proceeds to illuminate the somewhat lower-level metaconcepts addressed by his lectures on religion and on art.

He means to contrast that recollective way of proceeding with the idea of specifying or conveying those contents by *defining* them in terms of other concepts. This venerable idea is pathognomonic of *Verstand*. Like so much else of that categorial framework, it culminates in Kant, whose philosophical prose is algebraic, in the sense that almost all of his technical terms have definitions, and that those definitions can almost always be substituted for

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the defined terms in his subsequent claims to yield formulations of those claims to which he would assent. If *Verstand* definitions are the only alternative, then Hegel is just following his insight where it leads in insisting that recollective reconstructions are the only way to render intelligible the contents of speculative ideas. But if I am right about the distinctive metaconceptual, metatheoretical character of speculative and logical concepts, then the characteristic framework-explicating expressive role that they play, which sets them off from ground-level empirical and practical concepts, affords another route to their contents. For we can convey concepts of this metaconceptual sort by explicating what they make explicit: by saying what features of the use and content of ground-level concepts it is that they express. This is the route pursued in this work—and in this Conclusion. So I disagree with Hegel's assimilation of his philosophical concepts to ordinary "determinate" concepts in this respect.

There is a more substantive respect in which Hegel, as I read him, distinguishes "determinate" concepts from logical and philosophical ones. For he clearly and explicitly claims that it is possible to achieve a fully and completely expressively adequate set of philosophical and logical concepts. These are the concepts whose deployment at the end of the *Phenomenology* is announced as making possible "Absolute Knowing." They are the concepts expounded in the *Science of Logic*, which articulate *das System* (not *Hegel's* system, but *the System*). Thinking in these terms makes possible the final, fully transparent form of self-consciousness. On the metaconceptual reading, this means that these metaconcepts provide expressive tools sufficient to make explicit what we are doing when engaging in discursive practices—how constellations of commitments (including those regarding what is incompatible with what and what follows from what, which articulate conceptual contents) evolve experientially through the processes of empirical cognition and practical agency. Some of his readers have concluded, bizarrely, to my mind, that Hegel *also* thinks that there is or can be a final, fully adequate set of determinate ground-level empirical and practical concepts and commitments. There is no evidence he thought any such thing—if one is careful in keeping track of the distinction he clearly makes between philosophical-logical concepts and determinate empirical concepts. I take it he thought that the process of determining truth and conceptual content, the "vast Bacchanalian revel, with not a soul sober," is for empirical concepts an everlasting

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party, for reasons of deep principle. The truth-process at the ground level is one that *necessarily* always has the potential, and is subject to an inextinguishable normative *obligation*, to continue on through further stages.

Supposing that that is right, Hegel sharply distinguishes philosophical concepts in this respect. The metaconceptual reading of those concepts offers room for such a distinction from ground-level concepts. The sensuous immediacy that always confronts and must be absorbed and digested into conceptual form is an inexhaustible normative motive force for change. It does not follow that what is true of empirical theories must be true of metatheories of them. Perhaps here, full expressive adequacy can be achieved. Perhaps not. It is possible that expressive progress in our metaconcepts, driven by inevitable experiences of error, inadequacy, and failure, requiring repair and recollective vindication of those repairs, is also a never-ending process. On this question, I think we should be prepared to be critical.

X. The Age of Trust: Reachieving Heroic Agency

Already in his *Introduction* Hegel had pursued the Kantian thought that the most important epistemological issues should be addressed in terms of their implicit semantic presuppositions. Given his normative pragmatics, Hegel's pragmatist semantics dictates that cognition be discussed in the wider social context of the institution of norms by recognition. The edifying aim of Hegel's semantic theory is to rationalize and motivate us to adopt cognitive practices taking a distinctive new postmodern shape. Practical cognitive attitudes of confession and forgiveness institute a new kind of cognitive community. Exercises of practical agency within such a postmodern cognitive community exhibit a new, symmetrical normative structure of authority and responsibility: trust. It is an essentially *historical* social structure because of the role *recollection* plays in it.

Recollection and recollective rationality are the bridge between Hegel's semantics and its edifying effect on our cognitive practices. On the side of semantics, recollection establishes and gives practical significance to the representational dimension of conceptual content. That is the relation between the subjective form of conceptual content in representing thoughts, articulated by deontic normative relations of material incompatibility and

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consequence, on the one hand, and the objective form of conceptual content in represented facts, articulated by alethic modal relations of material incompatibility and consequence, on the other hand. On the side of pragmatics, when recollection becomes a form of recognition (as magnanimous forgiveness) it institutes unalienated, *sittlich* relations between normative statuses and normative attitudes. Both the status-dependence of normative attitudes and the attitude-dependence of normative statuses are given their due.

The story here accordingly concludes by looking more closely at the sort of recognitive community and the nature of the newly self-conscious sort of intentional agency it supports, which our hard-won semantic understanding motivates us to institute. At its core is forgiveness: recognition in the form of recollection.

Hegel calls the traditional *sittlich* practical understanding of intentional agency “heroic,” in the sense that agents take responsibility for their doings under all the descriptions true of those doings. No normative distinction is made between what was done intentionally, or what the agent knew he was doing, on the one hand, and what he did unintentionally and without realizing that that is what he was doing. Thus Oedipus is held responsible for killing his father and marrying his mother, even though he did not intend to do those things and was not aware that that is what he was doing. For those are still things he *did*, not just things that *happened*. Oedipus did intend to, and did, kill *that man* and marry *that woman*. On the traditional, heroic conception it is the normative statuses that matter, not the agent’s attitudes. Parricide and incest *ought not be*. One should not act so as to incur the normative status of father killer and mother fucker. The ought-to-*dos* governing attitudes are just to be read off of the ought-to-*bes* that articulate statuses. Attitudes of knowing and intending matter only in determining *that* one is responsible for a deed, not for determining *what* one thereby did and so is responsible for having done. The status one acquires by doing something is not itself construed as mitigated by or otherwise relativized in any way to the attitudes of intending and knowing in virtue of which it counts as one’s doing in the first place. That one did not mean to do what one did can engender sympathy, but it does not diminish responsibility.

It is for this reason, Hegel thinks, that the traditional *heroic* practical conception of agency is inevitably always also a *tragic* conception. The tragedy

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does not consist in the badness of the outcome. It consists in the fact that in acting at all one puts oneself at the mercy of forces outside of one's knowledge and control. Those alien forces determine the content of one's actual deed, what one turns out to have done and to be responsible for having done. (Hegel quotes in this connection the medieval European proverb: "When a flung stone leaves the hand, it belongs to the devil.") Tragedy is the unavoidable submission of the heroic agent to *fate*. The idea of *fate* invokes not some sort of determinism or antecedent necessitation of outcome but just those dark (because unknowable and uncontrollable) forces that engulf and overwhelm what is launched by one's limited knowledge and intention, transforming it into deeds that reach far beyond those attitudes into unforeseeable culpability. Shouldering the responsibility that fate in this sense brings down upon one who acts is tragic heroism. This is the intimate relation of mutual presupposition between *tragedy*, *fate*, and *heroism*.

By contrast to this tragic practical conception of agency in terms of heroic identification with and submission to one's fate, the modern conception of agency is distinguished precisely by the idea that agents are genuinely responsible for (status), and so should be held responsible for (attitude), only what they intended to do and knew they were doing. Davidson well articulates the distinction at the core of the modern conception when he distinguishes, among the specifications of things one has genuinely *done*, between descriptions under which what one did is *intentional* (turning on the light) and descriptions of what one did that are merely *consequential* (alerting the burglar, of whom one was unaware). What makes an event a doing at all, something that is imputable to an agent, is that it is intentional under *some* description. But that event then counts as a doing under *all* its specifications, including those that pick it out by consequences that were not intended or foreseen by the agent. It is of the essence of the modern idea of practical responsibility that acknowledgments and attributions of the normative *status* of responsibility are conditioned by and proportional to the agent's *attitudes* of intending and believing. It is now seen to be unjust to condemn or blame someone for what he did on the basis of consequential descriptions under which the agent did not intend it and could not foresee it. Those *attitudes* of agents, what they intend and believe, are taken to play constitutive roles in determining their normative *status* as culpable or admirable. This conception of responsibility as proportioned to intention and knowledge is the applica-

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tion to the practical understanding of intentional agency of the distinctively modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses.

The core of distinctively modern practical self-consciousness is for Hegel a special way of understanding the “distinction that action implies”: “that between what is purposed and what is accomplished in the realm of existence.” [PR §114Z] It is to distinguish two senses in which agents do things, a narrower and a wider one, and to restrict responsibility to what is done in the narrow sense.

It is the right of the of the will to recognize as its *action* [Handlung], and to accept *responsibility* for, only those aspects of its *deed* [Tat] which it knew to be presupposed within its end, and which were present in its *purpose* [Vorsatz]—I can be made *accountable* for a deed only if *my will was responsible* for it—the *right of knowledge*.¹⁶ [PR §117]

He explicitly appeals to this distinction as marking the decisive difference from traditional practical conceptions of agency:

The *heroic* self-consciousness (as in ancient tragedies like that of Oedipus) has not yet progressed from its unalloyed simplicity to reflect on the distinction between *deed* [Tat] and *action* [Handlung], between the external event and the purpose and knowledge of the circumstances, or to analyse the consequences minutely, but accepts responsibility for the deed in its entirety. [PR §118Z]

Hegel takes it that making this distinction between *Tat* and *Handlung* is a decisive advance in our understanding of ourselves as agents. But this new level of practical self-consciousness courts the danger of a distinctive kind of alienation from its deeds.

Consciousness, therefore, through its experience in which it should have found its truth, has really become a riddle to itself: the consequences of its deed are for it not the deeds themselves. What befalls it is, for it, not the experience of what it is in itself, the transition is not a mere alteration of the form of the same content and essence, presented now as the content and essence, and again as the object or [outwardly] beheld essence of itself. [PG 365]

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If we misunderstand the distinction that action essentially involves by rendering it according to the Masterly categories of pure independence [*Verstand*], where authority must be total to be real, then our deeds are split into a native normative region of responsibility for what we are authoritative about and an alien, merely causally related region, comprising the unintended, unforeseen consequences of what we are genuinely authoritative about and responsible for. What threatens to go missing is the complementary unity that action essentially involves, the sense in which

[a]ction simply translates an initially implicit being into a being that is made explicit. [PG 401]

Because we are not considered responsible for unintended, unforeseen consequences of what we do intentionally and knowingly, those aspects of our doings are not understood as really part of what we have done. For, as Kant saw, agency must be understood in terms of the authority to make ourselves responsible. And on the misunderstanding Hegel sees as part and parcel of the modern form of practical self-consciousness, *no one* is responsible for the part of the deed imputed to the agent that outruns what was authorized by her intentions, purposes, and reasons. Relative to the premodern, heroic conception, this notion of agency appears as severely cramped and contracted. In the purest, Kantian, form of this modern conception, what we genuinely do, in the sense of being responsible for, extends no farther than our intendings (willings, volitions) themselves.

The metaconceptual categories that articulate the self-consciousness characteristic of modernity—on display in Kant's purifying distillation of it, which brings it to fulfillment and completion—are those of *Verstand*. At their core is the idea of pure independence, which though showing up in specifically different guises, is the generic structure that informs and deforms both traditional and modern forms of *Geist*. Diagnosed in Hegel's allegory of Mastery and Servitude, it is the idea of authority without correlative responsibility to some countervailing authority. It is what deflects the progressive elements of Kant's conception of autonomy into the contraction of objectively efficacious agency to the subjective realm of will, shrinking agents' responsibilities from their doings to their mere tryings: that over which they can be misunderstood as having unlimited authority. The post-

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modern form of agency and its practical and theoretical self-understanding is to be structured instead by the metaconceptual categories of Hegelian *Vernunft*.

The conception of *Vernunft* is what explains the reciprocity of the normative statuses of authority and responsibility (the sense in which they are always two sides of one coin) and the reciprocity of normative recognitive attitudes of acknowledging and attributing authority and responsibility, and the relations between these. In doing so, it reconciles the distinctively modern insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses—the sense in which statuses of authority and responsibility are instituted by reciprocal recognitive attitudes—with the traditional appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes. This is the dimension along which attributions and acknowledgments of commitments (responsibilities undertaken by exercising one's authority to do so) answer for their correctness to what agents are really committed to. The alienation that is the worm in the shining apple of modernity is the practical incapacity to see how normative statuses can *both* be instituted by normative attitudes *and* transcend those attitudes, so as genuinely to constrain them. His conception of *Vernunft*, and how it overcomes the commitment to Mastery as pure independence manifested in *Verstand*, is Hegel's response to this challenge. It is what animates the post-modern shape of self-conscious practical agency.

At the heart of *Vernunft*, we have seen, is the conception of *recollection*. For the key to understanding the way Hegel moves beyond the *basic* Hegelian normative statuses jointly socially instituted by *synchronic* reciprocal *relations* of recognitive attitudes consists in appreciating the orthogonal *diachronic* historical dimension of recognitive *processes*. As we saw, Hegel emphasizes the significance for his story of such temporally evolving processes already in his *Introduction*, where we are taught that in order to understand representational relations between what things are for consciousness and what they are in themselves, we must look to the process that is the experience of error. It is the recollective phase of diachronic recognitive processes that explains the attitude-transcendence of normative statuses. That includes the special cognitive representational norms according to which representing attitudes are responsible for their correctness to standards set by what counts as represented by those representings just in virtue of exercising that distinctive kind of authority over them. (It is this part of Hegel's story that has been

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misunderstood in terms of coherence or consensus—not because anything he says encourages this, but because readers who ignored the historical dimension could not see any alternative, given the evident social underpinnings of his account.) Discursive norms, both practical and cognitive, are understood according to the categories of *Vernunft* as features of essentially social and historical cognitive processes, developing in tandem with the attitudes that articulate them. Understanding operating according to the categories of *Verstand* is blind to both the social and the historical dimensions of conceptual norms.

So what does intentional agency look like when viewed from the standpoint of *Vernunft*? To begin with, on the horizontal level of contemporaneous cognitive attitudes, we have a social division of normative labor between the deliberating and acting agent and the assessing community. The practical attitudes of the agent have authority over her doing in the narrow sense it is of the essence of modernity to distinguish: what Hegel calls the action, *Handlung*. The practical attitudes of the community have authority over the doing in the wide sense acknowledged already by traditional conceptions: what Hegel calls the deed, *Tat*. The first corresponds to specifications under which what happens is intentional and foreseen. The second corresponds to specifications in terms of consequences that were not intended or foreseen, but which count as things done, rather than *just* things that happen, because that very same event is intentional and foreseen under *some* specifications. The agent herself has no distinctive authority regarding the attribution of the doing under these specifications. They are available to any interested party. Hegel says:

Actualization is . . . a display of what is one's own in the element of universality whereby it becomes, and should become, the affair of everyone. [PG 417]

The work is, i.e. it exists for other individualities. . . . The work produced is the reality which consciousness gives itself; it is that in which the individual is explicitly for himself what he is implicitly or in himself, and in such a manner that the consciousness for which the individual becomes explicit in the work is not the particular, but the universal, consciousness. [PG 405]

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The “universal consciousness” here invokes the attitudes of the recognitive community.

As construed according to the constellation of metaconcepts that is Hegelian *Vernunft*, both the authority of the individual agent and the authority of the community of those recognized by and recognizing the agent essentially involve correlative forms of responsibility. Adopting the attitude that is endorsing an end or purpose, practically committing oneself, intending, is undertaking a distinctive kind of responsibility. And imputing the deed to the agent in the wider sense of something done by the agent, but for which the agent is not responsible in the narrow sense in which she is responsible for what she does knowingly and intentionally, is also taking a certain kind of responsibility for it. To understand those responsibilities, one must consider the vertical historical dimension, and look to the way they structure temporally extended processes.

For the paradigmatic actions Hegel addresses are not the punctiform events on which recent Anglophone action-theory has focused: flipping a switch, signing a document, calling a taxi, hanging up one’s hat, and the like. The kinds of doings he is principally interested in are processes rather than events: writing a book, building a house, learning a trade, diagnosing or treating a disease. The two sorts of cases are alike in that the agent is responsible for both sorts of doing in the sense of being answerable as to her reasons for what she does. But they are unlike in that Hegel is concerned also with the agent’s responsibility to formulate and carry out a plan, endorsing instrumentally structured subgoals and subplans, and to adapt those plans to contingencies arising during their execution, and he is concerned with all the instrumentally subordinate reasons that show up and come to bear on the success or failure of that extended process.

There is, however, a more striking difference between the projected *Vernunft* conception of agency and more familiar modern *Verstand* conceptions (under which rubric Hegel would include contemporary ones such as those of Davidson and Anscombe). That difference lies in the understanding of the responsibilities the agent’s recognitive community undertakes for the deeds of the agent. These are the responsibilities that complement the partly constitutive recognitive authority that community exercises—the authority to acknowledge, by *holding* the agent responsible, the partly constitutive

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practical authority the agent has to *make* herself responsible, in the ways distinctive of intentional agency. These communal responsibilities have no analogue in the modern conception. For on the postmodern *Vernunft* conception, the recognitive community not only has the authority to attribute the deed under descriptions in terms of unforeseen, unintended consequences; it in a distinctive way *takes responsibility itself* for the deed under those consequential specifications.

Properly understood and instituted, agency involves a division of normative labor in which agent and recognitive community play complementary roles. The agent exercises a distinctive kind of authority and undertakes a distinctive kind of correlative responsibility insofar as her acknowledgment of practical commitments (the attitudes that are intentions, Hegel's *Vorsätze*) sets into motion the process that is the deed. But the deed is understood as not done by the agent alone, but as also done in a different, although equally constitutive sense by the agent's community. All are responsible for the doings of each, and each for the doings of all. Appreciating this is the fundamental practical, agentive aspect of the self-understanding of *Geist* that is fully self-conscious as

this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: "I" that is "We" and "We" that is "I."
[PG 177]

I have been reading Hegel's "independence" here as invoking the reciprocal authority of the different parties to the action, and insisting with him that it necessarily involves also reciprocal responsibility—that is, "dependence."

The recognitive community's responsibilities for the deeds of its members are of two principal kinds: constructive ameliorative consequential responsibilities and reconstructive recollective hermeneutic responsibilities. The first are made possible because the deed an agent's intention sets in motion is a process that is never finished and done with. It has true specifications in terms of any and all of its consequences, however distant. (This is what Davidson refers to as the "accordion effect.") And those consequences roll on to infinity.

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Action has multiple *consequences* in so far as it is translated into external existence; for the latter, by virtue of its context in external necessity, develops in all directions. These consequences, as the *shape* whose *soul* is the *end* to which the action is directed, belong to the action as an integral part of it. But the action, as the end translated into the external world, is at the same time exposed to external forces which attach to it things quite different from what it is for itself, and impel it on into remote and alien consequences. [PR §118]

That those consequences are “remote and alien” to the motivating intention (what the action is *for* the agent) but also “an integral part of it,” its “shape and soul,” is what makes the agent’s doing on the modern, alienated conception, “a riddle to itself: the consequences of its deed are for it not the deed itself.” By contrast, for the recognitive community attributing the deed, the consequences that outrun the specifications under which the doing is intentional (exercises of the authority of the agent) are an essential element of the deed. And the first point is that the community can intervene to affect those consequences. Subsequent actions by those who recognize the original agent and attribute the action contribute to the content of the always-evolving deed. Part of what one must do in order to count thereby as recognizing the original agent as one of *us* (a member of *our* recognitive community) is acknowledging one’s own responsibility to shape the agent’s deed by affecting its consequences. (One application of this view is Hegel’s notorious claim that punishment is recognitively owed to the criminal by the community. His fellow community members recognize him by punishing him. It counted as a crime insofar as his doing had the expressive significance of a rejection of recognitive community. By punishing him his fellows practically and constitutively reject that rejection of recognitive community.)

Leibniz took it to be a fact that nothing is for nothing in this best of all possible worlds—that what initially looks to be defective, a failure, or evil will eventually be redeemed and be visible (at least to God) as making a positive contribution, indeed, as being just what is necessary for the outcome to be optimal, the whole to which it contributes ideal. Hegel radicalizes Kant’s notion of a regulative ideal to understand this Leibnizian perfectionist thought, as expressing not an objective fact, but the content of a

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commitment: as something subjects are responsible for *making* true. Recognizing an agent as one of us is practically treating what she did as part of what we all are doing. Adopting that attitude is acknowledging the responsibility to make what was already done come out right, as a constraint on what we have reason to do now. What we must have reasons for, what we must justify doing now, is a deed that includes everything already done by those we recognize as our fellows. It is part of our task to see to it that those earlier doings make positive contributions to the larger whole that subsumes it—a whole that includes and so is partly constituted by our own current and future doings. Those earlier deeds are ongoing processes that flow as if streams into the river that is *our* doing. When agency is understood and recognitively institutionalized according to the metaconception of *Vernunft*, the act of one is recognized as the act of all. This conception is epitomized by the Musketeers' slogan: "One for all and all for one."

To understand what guides and sets standard for practical constructive ameliorative consequential interventions in the evolving processes that are the deeds of the members of a *vernünftig* cognitive community, we must look to the companion recollective reconstructive hermeneutic responsibility. The recollective task is one of rationalization, vindication, justification—of finding reasons in and for what happened. The job of recollection is, in the Hegelian slogan, giving contingency the form of necessity—that is, retrospectively exhibiting that contingency as norm-governed after all. Doing that is turning a mere past into an intelligible history. (Our history is both what makes us what we are and something we make.) Recognitively recollecting intentional doings is imputing to each one, under all its disparate and contingent specifications and manifestations, a distinctive kind of unified content. That content, what Hegel calls an "Absicht," is a kind of rationalizing intention that stands to the deed in the wide, consequence-including sense, as the original, individually motivating practical commitment (Hegel's *Vorsatz*) stands to the action in the narrow sense in which it is intentional (Hegel's *Handlung*) and so rationalizable by the practical reasoning of the agent. The new consequential specifications of a doing that later community members are to contribute as part of their practical cognitive responsibility to those they hold responsible for intentional doings are supposed to be ones that make it easier to perform the recollective-reconstructive task on the emerging whole to which they contribute.

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The aim is to make the deed as rationally reconstructed one that those recollecting it can endorse now, on their own behalf. However unpromising it might have seemed at the outset, the process the agent initiated by acknowledging a practical commitment (*Vorsatz*) is to be seen as turning out to have been a good one, one there is reason to have promoted then and to endorse now. Some illumination can be gained by comparison and contrast with the paradigm of recollection with which I introduced the notion earlier, and to which I have returned repeatedly in this work. Judges at common law justify their current decision by exhibiting it as the culmination of process encompassing prior precedential decisions concerning the applicability of the same concepts. That process is rationally reconstructed, by careful selection and characterization of precedents, so as to take the form of the gradual emergence into explicitness of a norm that becomes visible as having been all along implicit in the deliberations of prior judges. In that case, what is recollectively vindicated, motivated, and justified is the current judge's practical attitude (applying or withholding the application of a legal concept), whereas in the case of agency what is recollectively vindicated, motivated, and justified is the original attitude of undertaking a practical commitment, which is now recollected as norm-governed (correct, precedential). The two sorts of case have, as it were, different directions of fit. But in rationalizing their own attitude, the recollecting judges also vindicate and endorse the prior decisions whose authority they acknowledge by treating them as precedential. The retrospective rational reconstruction of an expressively progressive tradition incorporating prior adoptions of attitudes displays a norm (emerging into greater explicitness) that at least partly validates all the attitudes it incorporates as having precedential authority. That is analogous to the way in which the retrospective rational reconstructions of other members of the recognitive community can recollectively vindicate the actions set in motion by their fellows. It is also true that the judge's own decision is responsible to the practical attitudes of earlier judges, manifested in their decisions, in that the authority of the current decision derives entirely from its fidelity to the norm it reconstructs as emerging from those earlier ones.

The final form of mutual recognition, discussed at the end of the long *Spirit* chapter of the *Phenomenology*, is that in which the reciprocal recognitive attitudes take the form Hegel denominates "*confession*" and "*forgiveness*." Hegel himself does not offer a name for this structure of recognition. Adopting

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and adapting a term he uses in a related context, I call this recognitive structure “trust” (his “Vertrauen”). This is recognition conceived and practiced according to the categories of *Vernunft*. Hegel presents it as developing out of the modern practical conception according to categories of *Verstand*, as distilled to its essence by Kant. In his allegorical presentation, the decisive move is the “breaking of the hard heart of the judge,” who, confronting the confession of the miscreant gives up the superior pose he has so far adopted, forgives, and himself confesses in turn: “I am as you are.” What is confessed and forgiven is the gap or disparity between normative attitudes and normative statuses. One confesses that what one has done is not *simply* to act according to a norm. One has always done both more and less than what one ought, what is appropriate or required. One’s attitude of acknowledging or attributing a commitment never does full justice to it, never gets its content quite right. One’s acknowledgment at once of the authority of a norm and of one’s responsibility to it is always impure, evincing an imperfect grasp of the content of the norm, admixed with other motives, and affected by the context of other collateral commitments.

Let us look more closely at how the transition to the third age of *Geist* is described and motivated. The *Spirit* chapter of the *Phenomenology* rehearses the progressive development from the traditional to the modern structure of *Geist*, so as to prepare us readers for the epiphany in which that development culminates: the envisaged transition to the third, postmodern stage, the age of trust. The capstone achievement of self-consciousness that brings about this transformation is making explicit what shows up retrospectively as having been all along the implicitly governing structural norm of recognition. As we saw, Hegel introduces this newly self-conscious form of normativity (and hence subjectivity) in the rhetorical form of a pair of allegories: the allegory of the hero and his valet, and the allegory of the penitent confessing his transgression to the hard-hearted, unforgiving judge.

Hegel introduces the first with a twist on a well-known slogan of his day:

No man is a hero to his valet; not, however, because the man is not a hero, but because the valet—is a valet. [PG 665]

The hero is allegorical for one who acts out of appreciation of his duty, one who fulfills his responsibilities, one who acts as he ought, as he is committed

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to act, one who in his practical attitudes and actions acknowledges the bindingness or authority of norms. “Valet” is the English translation of the German “Kammerdiener,” literally, room-servant. The valet in the allegory sees the attitudes of the hero not as governed by and expressive of the acknowledgment of norms, but as the product of immediate sensuous desires and contingent particular inclinations. The *Kammerdiener* stands for a view that explains all attitudes in terms of other attitudes, without needing to appeal to governing norms that they are attitudes toward and acknowledgments of. Hegel does not deny that this sort of explanation in terms of attitudes alone can be done. The norm-blind reductive naturalist perspective is an available perspective.

Hegel denominates the norm-blind reductive naturalism for which the *Kammerdiener* stands “niederträchtig.” The contrasting norm-sensitive hero-aware meta-attitude that takes some attitudes to be themselves genuinely norm-sensitive and norm-acknowledging he calls “edelmütig.” Hegel thinks that in being discursive beings at all, in believing and acting, we have already implicitly committed ourselves to an *edelmütig* meta-attitude. This is a possibility afforded by *Vernunft*, which, when it comes to explicit self-consciousness ushers in the postmodern structure of *Geist*.

The issue addressed by the allegory of the *Kammerdiener* concerns the intelligibility of the traditional idea of the status-dependence of normative attitudes in the face of the modern insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. The *Kammerdiener* stands for the self-sufficiency, the explanatory sovereignty, of attitudes. But this meta-attitude does not leave room for the authority and efficacy of norms—for the idea that normative statuses of authority and responsibility, what one is really entitled or committed to, make a real difference to attitudes that accordingly deserve to be thought of as *acknowledgments* of those norms.

The normative governance of attitudes by norms has two dimensions, deontic and alethic. First, the norms (normative statuses) serve as *standards for assessment of the correctness of attitudes*. My attitudes of acknowledging a commitment myself, or attributing a commitment to others, are correct just in case we really are committed, in case those attitudes properly reflect the statuses they are attitudes toward. This is what it is for the attitudes in question to be *normative* attitudes: attitudes toward norms, attitudes of acknowledging or attributing normative statuses. Second, the norms they are attitudes toward

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should make a difference to the adoption of those attitudes. The attitudes should be *subjunctively sensitive* to the normative statuses they acknowledge and attribute. This is to say that the norms are efficacious, in that *if* the content of the norm being acknowledged or attributed *were* (or *had been*) different, the attitude *would be* (or *would have been*) different.

The heroism of the hero is allegorical for the norm-governedness of his attitudes in this dual sense. The correctness of his attitudes is to be assessed according to the standard provided by the norms he acknowledges, and his practical attitudes are understood as being sensitive to the contents of those norms, in that if the norms were different, the hero's attitudes would be different. The challenge allegorically represented by the *Kammerdiener* is to make the possibility of the status-dependence of normative attitudes intelligible in the face of the standing possibility (which Hegel admits) of purely naturalistic genealogical alternative accounts of the advent of normative attitudes that appeal only to other attitudes. If invocation of normative governance of attitudes by normative statuses is not *necessary* to account for the attitudes, it is not clear how it can be *legitimate*. Insofar as this reductive naturalist challenge to the normativity of agency cannot be convincingly met, the result is *alienation* from the norms, the loss of traditional *sittlich* practical appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes, of the authority or bindingness of norms on attitudes.

The second allegory, of the confessing miscreant and the hard-hearted judge, presents a different sort of challenge to the intelligibility of the governance of practical attitudes by norms. It stems from Kantian rigorism about what is required for genuine responsiveness to norms, rather than from reductive naturalism. What the miscreant confesses is the admixture of non-normative attitudes in the causes of his action. He did not act just out of acknowledgment of "pure duty for duty's sake." Other attitudes also provided motives to which the action was subjunctively sensitive, in the sense that if they had been different (and the norm not), what was done would have been different. Subjunctive sensitivity was not limited to the content of the norm being acknowledged. The doing was in this regard both more than and less than a pure acknowledgment of the norm. Here the challenge is not that treating the performance as the acknowledgment of a norm is not *necessary* to explain the practical attitude, but rather that it is not *sufficient*. If invocation of normative governance is not by itself *sufficient* to account for attitudes

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(because an admixture of contingent, particular motives and circumstances—what the penitent confesses—is also always in play), then how can it be *legitimate*?

The challenge to the intelligibility of normative governance comes from the idea that the authority of norms over attitudes must be *total* in order to be *genuine*. It is a manifestation of the deformed conception of *pure independence*: the idea that authority (normative independence) is undercut by any sort of correlative responsibility to (dependence on) anything else. This is the practical normative conception Hegel criticizes allegorically under the rubric of “Mastery.” Hegel sees Kant as perfectly distilling the essence of the modern form of this conception, as part of his otherwise progressive understanding of normativity in terms of autonomy. As a result, Kant adopts a *contraction* strategy, in which genuine doings shrink down to mere willings, because every more robust sense of action involves responsibility to other factors, subjective and objective, that are not themselves in the same sense governed by the norm that rationalizes the willing. In the allegory, the hard-hearted judge is the Kantian rigorist, who takes it that the penitent’s confession of an admixture of nonnormative motives shows that the action does not (also) express the acknowledgment of a norm, and so must be judged lawless. The affinity to the reductive naturalism of the *Kammerdiener* should be clear. For there, too, the mere possibility of a nonnormative, reductive naturalistic explanation of attitudes is taken to preempt the normative governance explanation, and in that sense to deny the authority of the norm. If the normative governance account of an attitude has a rival, it is taken to have no authority at all. Independence is seen as incompatible with any sort of dependence. Any correlative responsibility undermines claims of authority.

Unlike the *Kammerdiener* allegory, the allegory of the hard-hearted judge is extended to provide a path forward to a proper understanding of the status-dependence of normative attitudes. The “breaking of the hard heart” occurs when the judge rejects his original *niederträchtig* response to the confession of the wrongdoer and replaces it with forgiveness and an *edelmütig* confession of his own. The result is the achievement of a new kind of community (“The reconciling Yea, in which the two ‘I’s let go their antithetical existence, is the existence of the ‘I’ which has expanded into a duality.” [PG 671]). This is the final, *vernünftig*, postmodern form of reciprocal recognition, and

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so, of normativity and of *Geist*, structured by the normativity instituted by that newly self-conscious form of recognition.

What the contrite agent confesses is everything in its deed that is not norm-governed—in Hegel’s idiom, every manifestation of particularity (the agent’s circumstances and collateral attitudes in the form of intentions or beliefs, and of contingent unintended consequences) rather than universality (norm, governing normative status). It confesses every failure of the status-dependence of the practical attitudes whose content is revealed in the deed as actually done. Confession [Geständnis] in this sense is at once a performance partly constitutive of a special form of self-consciousness and a petition for recognition. (The connection is forged by Hegel’s understanding of self-consciousness as a social status that is the social product of attitudes of mutual recognition.) In Hegel’s allegory, it is met not with an *edelmütig* reciprocating recognition, but with a *niederträchtig* merely critical assessment of failure to fulfill responsibilities (failure of attitudes to be normatively governed by statuses). The blaming, hard-hearted Kantian rigorist judge plays the “role of the moral valet” to the penitent agent.

The consciousness that judges in this way is itself base, because it divides up the action, producing and holding fast to the disparity of the action with itself. Further, it is hypocrisy, because it passes off such judging, not as another manner of being wicked, but as the correct consciousness of the action, setting itself up in this unreality and conceit of knowing well and better above the deeds it discredits, and wanting its words without deeds to be taken for a superior kind of reality. [PG 666]

The judge’s attitudes are exclusively adopted from the perspective of normative *assessment*. The judge as assessor does not identify with the perspective of the deliberating agent, or even acknowledge the essential complementary roles in constituting normative statuses played by attitudes of assessment and deliberation—that is, attribution to another and acknowledgment one-self of practical commitments.

The point of this episode in the allegory is to enforce the contrast with the next step. The “breaking of the hard heart” describes the adoption by the assessing consciousness of the appropriate *edelmütig* recognitive response to the petition for recognition that is the penitent’s confession. That response

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Hegel denominates “forgiveness” [Verzeihung]. To understand the structure of normativity that gives *Geist* its characteristic postmodern shape, we must understand the constellation of reciprocal recognitive attitudes that institutes that structure. This is recognition in the form of mutual confession and forgiveness: the structure of trust. The shift to forgiveness that is the breaking of the judge’s hard heart is a move from the judge merely *attributing* responsibility for the agent’s deed to the judge practically *acknowledging* his own responsibility for that deed. As such, it is an act of *identification with* the doer, by making oneself coresponsible for what was done. The appropriate response to confession of an incapacity to produce deeds that are simply and purely governed by norms is for the judge to make a corresponding confession, to acknowledge “I am as you are,” admitting that the judge, like the agent, is also doomed to act from a mixture of attitudes that are acknowledgments of governing norms and attitudes that are not such acknowledgments.

The responsibility the assessing consciousness undertakes for what is done is complementary to the responsibility the deliberating consciousness undertakes for its act, rather than identical with it. It has two dimensions: reparative and recollective. The reparative responsibility is practically to intervene in the still-unfolding consequences of the doing, which provide an ever-increasing stock of consequential specifications of it. The deed is never done, and part of the generous *edelmütig* way of holding someone responsible for what they do is to acknowledge responsibility for helping to make it turn out well. One can do that by practically contributing new consequences, thereby making-true new consequential specifications of the deed. When everyone does acknowledge a responsibility to do that, each doing by a member of a community whose constitutive recognitive attitudes to one another take the form of confession and forgiveness is a doing by all. The deed of each is the deed of all.

But what counts as “better” consequences? The standard for such normative assessments of consequences is set by the other, recollective dimension of forgiveness. The reparative responsibility to ameliorate the consequences of the doing being forgiven must be understood in terms of recollection. The aim is to make the whole that results from one’s current action, thought of as a contribution to a tradition, *more fully and successfully recollectable* than that tradition would otherwise be. So this constraint, too, is defined in

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terms of recollection. It is the norms of recollection that determine what count as “better” consequences, and to which contributing to such consequences must be subjunctively sensitive.

XI. Forgiveness: Recognition as Recollection

Recognition in the form of recollective forgiveness is the key to understanding norm-governedness in general. Taking recollective responsibility for another’s doing is practically acknowledging the obligation to tell a certain kind of retrospective story about that doing. That is the responsibility to rationally reconstruct it *as* norm-governed. The magnanimous forgiving recollector must discern an implicit norm that governs the development of the deed. This is the intention [Absicht], which stands to the consequentially extended *Tat* as the agent’s initial *Vorsatz* stands to the *Handlung*, which is the narrower action specified only under the descriptions explicitly licensed by the purpose for which it was performed. The *Absicht* must be exhibited as normatively governing the doing in the dual sense both of serving as a normative standard for assessment of the practical attitudes it governs (each specification of the doing being thought of as an acknowledgment of that norm) and as being the norm that those attitudes can be seen to have been subjunctively sensitive to, in the sense that had the norm been different, so would the attitudes.

One recollectively discerns / imputes a norm that is in the form of an *Absicht*: something that governs the practical process as what is being *striven* for or *aimed* at. Saying that goes beyond just saying that it serves as a normative standard for assessments of the success of practical attitudes. For that could be true without entailing that anyone cares about the standard and is making decisions in the light of what the norm enjoins (is being heroic, in the sense the *Kammerdiener* denies). The additional element involves thinking of each component of the subsequent retrospectively constructed / discovered tradition as surrounded by a cloud of incompatible alternatives. The recollective forgiver then practically takes or treats the subject of the attitude in question as *choosing* the alternative taken (the one incorporated in the recollective-recognitive forgiveness-narrative), as having *selected* it out of the cloud of relevant alternatives, identifying with it by rejecting them. That

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is what it is to treat the governing norm as not just a norm of assessment, but as an *Absicht*. This is rationally reconstructing a tradition of attitudes that are status-dependent, in the sense of being governed, in the dual sense, by an implicit norm that becomes gradually more explicit as it is acknowledged by the attitudes incorporated in the recollected tradition.

The metanorm that governs recollective performances (and the practical attitudes they express) is that the norm one reconstructively discerns and imputes ought to normatively govern *all* the consequential specifications of attitudes in and downstream of the *Handlung*. That includes the practical-reparative and hermeneutic-recollective attitudes the assessing judge adopts. So the forgiving agent must endorse the norm being attributed as governing the deed—must acknowledge its authority. That is part of taking coresponsibility for it. In forgiving, one makes oneself responsible for the emerging norm one attributes as the implicit *Absicht* of the deed. This is *identifying with* the agent, in the sense of risking and if need be sacrificing one's own attitudes, by subjecting them to normative assessment according to the norm one both attributes and acknowledges, and being subjunctively sensitive to that norm in one's own attitudes. In this specific sense, the forgiving agent acknowledges the doing as its own, as the doing not *only* of the agent who initiated it, but *also* of the forgiving recollector.

Forgiving recollection can be understood on the model of the institutional common- or case-law jurisprudential practices mentioned earlier. There, the current judge rationally reconstructs the tradition by selecting a trajectory of prior precedential decisions that are expressively progressive, in that they reveal the gradual emergence into explicitness of a norm (the content of a law) that can be seen to have implicitly governed all the decisions (attitudes) in the reconstructed tradition. It is that norm that then justifies the current judge's decision. The norm that is seen as emerging from the rationally reconstructed tradition of decisions sets the standard for normative assessment by future judges of the current decision, which claims to be subjunctively sensitive to that very norm. So the recollecting judge subjects herself to (acknowledges the authority of) the norm she retrospectively discerns. The more of the prior decisions the recollection rationalizes and exhibits as expressive of the norm, the better the recollective warrant that norm provides for the current decision. The larger the residue of decisions that cannot be fit into the retrospectively rationally reconstructed tradition as precedentially

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rationalizing and expressive of the norm, the greater the scope for criticism of the current decision by future judges, who may or may not acknowledge it as correct and so precedentially authoritative. For the only authority the decision has derives from its being a suitable acknowledgment of responsibility to the tradition of prior decisions.

Forgiving (recollectively recognizing), on this account, is hard work. It cannot be brought off with a single, sweeping, abstractly general gesture: “I forgive you for what you did.” One could always *say* that—but saying it would not make it so. In addition to fulfilling one’s commitment to practically affect the consequences of the doing one is forgiving, one must produce a concrete recollective reconstruction of the deed, under all of its intentional and consequential specifications. Recollection is a *making*—the crafting of a distinctive kind of narrative—that is successful only insofar as it ends up being recognizable as having the form of a *finding*. What is found is found as having been all along implicit. What is implicit is for Hegel always to be understood in terms of the process of expressing it: making it explicit. Explaining what one must do in order thereby to count as recollecting is filling in the notion of expression. The implicit norm it imputes as governing a doing is in one sense made by the recollection, and in another found by it. The idea of a doing of this kind only seems paradoxical—like the idea of giving contingency the form of necessity. Recollection is the narrative genre to which the rationalization of decisions appealing to common or case law also belongs. One must recruit and assemble the raw materials one inherits so as to exhibit a norm one can oneself endorse as always having governed the tradition to which one oneself belongs, with which one oneself identifies—a tradition that shows up as progressively revealing a governing norm, making ever more explicit what was all along implicit. The expressively progressive tradition discerned culminates (for now) in the consequential specification of the doing that is that very recollection of it.

What if what one is given to work with (the sum of all the purposive and consequential specifications of the doing one inherits) is *too* hard to forgive? What if the subject of the attitude that is being forgiven as part of the larger enterprise of forgiving something upstream of it is in fact dispositionally unresponsive to the verdict of the norm? What if (as the *Kammerdiener* alleges) the doing in fact is sensitive only to other concerns (attitudes) particular to its subject? What if the consequences are just too dire? It seems that the

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metanormative criteria of adequacy for *successful* forgiveness, both reparative and recollective, are in many cases *impossible* to satisfy. Some things people have done strike us, even upon due reflection, as simply *unforgivable*. In these cases, though we might try to mitigate the consequences of evil doings, we have no idea at all how to go about discerning the emergence of a governing norm we could ourselves endorse. This is just the limiting case of a ubiquitous phenomenon. Any actual recollective undertaking will involve strains: elements of what is actually done, at *every* stage in the developing process, that *cannot* be smoothly, successfully, or convincingly given a satisfactory norm-responsive explanation.

Indeed. But now we must ask: Whose fault is it that the doing, or some aspect of it, is unforgivable—the doer or the forgiver? Is the failure that of the bad agent or of the bad recollector? Is whose fault it is a matter of how things anyway just are? Or is it at least partly reflective of the recollector's failure to come up with a more norm-responsive narrative? The first is the attitude of the *unsittlich* valet, for whom no one is a practically norm-acknowledging hero, in the sense of being genuinely responsive (subjunctively sensitive) to norms. To treat the recollective failure as wholly the fault of the doer, to take it as simply an objective fact that there is no norm we could endorse that governs the deed as the assessor inherits it, is to adopt exactly the blaming practical attitude of the hard-hearted judge—an attitude Hegel criticizes as *niederträchtig*. The contrasting *edelmütig* attitude he recollectively recommends as implicit in the idea of norm-governedness as such is rather recognition as recollective forgiveness, in the specific sense of identifying with the doer, taking coresponsibility for the doing. That is to acknowledge at least equal responsibility on the part of the unsuccessful forgiver. For the issue is not properly posed in alethic modal terms of the *possibility* or *impossibility* of forgiving what was done. It is a deontic normative matter. One is *committed* to forgiving, *responsible for* forgiving. This is the Hegelian version of a Kantian regulative ideal—one whose content is “Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner.” One can be committed to that recognitive ideal (normatively governed by it in the dual sense) even if one must in many cases confess that one *cannot* understand—and so forgive—all.

It might well be that one is in fact incapable of fulfilling that magnanimous commitment, of carrying out that responsibility to forgive in concrete detail. If and insofar as that is so, it is a normative failure that the unsuccessful

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would-be forgiver should *confess*. To take proper recognitive recollective responsibility requires the forgiving agent to confess his own inadequacy to the recollective task. (Compare: The judge at common law fails, in her recollective vindication of her own decision, to treat *all* previously decided cases as precedential. That fact makes her own authority vulnerable. She must trust future judges to find a way to forgive the incompleteness of her recollective reconstruction of a tradition, and treat her decision as nonetheless authoritative in the sense of precedential, because adequately acknowledging its responsibility to, the authority of, the tradition being retrospectively rationally reconstructed.) Your confession of a failure of your practical attitudes appropriately to acknowledge a norm is a petition for my recognition in the form of my forgiving recollective taking of (co)responsibility for your doing. My subsequent failure to adopt adequately forgiving recollective recognitive attitudes is something I, too, am responsible for confessing. That confession is itself an act of identification with you: “I am as you are.” My attitudes, like yours, fail adequately to satisfy the norms that they nonetheless acknowledge *as binding, as governing* those attitudes. For one acknowledges an obligation (the bindingness of a governing norm) insofar as one *confesses* the extent to which one has been unresponsive to the demands of the recollective norm, unable properly to fulfill a recognitive responsibility. And one is genuinely sensitive to that normative demand in making such a confession. Confessing is a kind of doing that *makes* it the case that one both acknowledges the authority of and is in fact sensitive to the norm recollected as governing the attitudes that make up the tradition one has discerned (including one’s own attitudes), even though one admits one’s incapacity to fulfill the responsibility one thereby acknowledges.

As a magnanimous, *edelmütig*, forgiving assessor of another’s doing, one *confesses* that it is (also) one’s *own* fault, that one is not good enough at forgiving. And one must *trust* that this recollective-recognitive failure, too—like the failure of the original, inadequately forgiven doer—will be more successfully forgiven by future assessors (who know more and are better at it). That one *cannot* successfully tell a recollective story is not what matters. That is a deontic failure, relative to one’s commitments. It is something to be *confessed*, in *trust* that that failure, too, can be *forgiven*. The well-meaning but incompetent forgiving recollector’s confession, like that of the contrite agent, is a petition for recognition in the form of forgiveness. The trusting confession

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of recollective failure completes the identification of the one playing the role of assessor with the one playing the role of agent. The recognitive attitudes of forgiveness and confession emerge as two sides of one coin, two aspects of the symmetrical, norm-instituting, recognitive structure of *trust*. Its slogan is “Attribute responsibility forgivingly, acknowledge responsibility contritely.” In a normative community with this recognitive structure, everyone forgives to the limits of each one’s ability, everyone confesses those limits, and everyone trusts that each, too, will eventually be forgiven. The content of the shared recognitive attitudes with which all parties identify is “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass before us.”

It is of the essence of both the reparative ameliorating dimension and the recollective hermeneutic dimension of the forgiving recognitive attitude that they address a performance that expresses a *prior* practical attitude. The doing being forgiven must already be under way. For this reason, the final, *vernünftig* form of reciprocal recognition as confession and forgiveness is essentially *historical*. The attitude-governing norms it institutes and acknowledges have the rich diachronic recognitive form of *traditions*. Hegel himself practices forgiving recollection, retrospectively rationally reconstructing expressively progressive traditions, in his own accounts of intellectual and cultural history, in the way he reads the history of art, religion, and especially philosophy. It is what I mean to be practicing in the stories I tell here.

The claim that is crucial for understanding the third age of *Geist* as retaining the progress made by modernity while overcoming its structural alienation is that recognition understood as including the recollective institution of traditions acknowledges both the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and the status-dependence of normative attitudes. On the one hand, it incorporates the insight that norms (normative statuses) are instituted by reciprocal recognition—that is, by recognitive attitudes that are symmetrical in the sense of being suitably socially complemented. On the other hand, each recollective rational reconstruction is obliged to display the normative attitudes it addresses as governed by norms (normative statuses) in the dual sense of being subject to assessment according to those norms and of being subjunctively sensitive to them. In this way, the postmodern recollective recognitive practices reachieve a *sittlich* appreciation of the authority of norms over attitudes, the sense in which attitudes are responsible to

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(governed by) norms they acknowledge and attribute. It is true that acknowledgment of the authority of governing norms is always within the scope of a recollective rational reconstructive *story* about what is going on. The normative status on which attitudes are understood as dependent (to which they are responsible) is itself always the object of a recollective attitude. In this sense, the overall account invokes nothing but attitudes. But *that* attitudes are status-dependent (norm-governed) is an essential, necessary, and characteristic structural feature of *every* recollective recognitive attitude as such. In that sense, the status-dependence of normative attitudes is not merely a contingent product of some attitudes people happen to adopt. It is in the end what makes normative attitudes *normative* attitudes—acknowledgments and attributions of normative *statuses* of responsibility and authority.

That the historical recognitive structure of trust (reciprocal recollective forgiveness and confession) balances and does equal justice to the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and to the status-dependence of normative attitudes is ultimately the justification for understanding forgiveness as the appropriate recognitive response to the petition for recognition that is confession. That recognitive structure provides the context in which it emerges that *attributing* responsibility (holding someone else responsible) and *acknowledging* responsibility (taking responsibility oneself) are not just different normative attitudes, and not just socially complementary normative attitudes that *globally* presuppose one another in the sense that they are each intelligible in principle only in a context that includes the other. They also presuppose one another *locally*, in a way that expresses an identity underlying their difference of social perspective. Confession makes the one who holds the penitent responsible for something, herself responsible for forgiving it. That is, confession normatively obliges the one who attributes a responsibility also to acknowledge a coresponsibility (both reparative and recollective) for that very same doing. That the attitudes of holding another responsible and oneself taking responsibility are in this very strong sense two sides of one coin (different only as aspects of a unity intelligible only as having both) turns out to have been implicit in the relations between normative statuses and normative attitudes all along. This is parallel to the metaphysically ironic lesson taught by the allegory of Mastery: authority and responsibility are not just coordinate normative statuses in that if X has

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authority over Y, then Y is responsible to X. For it to be determinately contentful, X's authority must also always involve X having a correlative responsibility and must acknowledge the authority of some others to *hold X* responsible. Pure normative independence, without any corresponding dependence, is a fantasy. When acted on practically, that fantasy of authority without responsibility (*pure* independence, the ideology of Mastery) metaphysically deforms both the normative statuses it institutes and the self-conscious individuals whose statuses they are.

We have seen that one special case where it is particularly important to be able to make sense of the status-dependence of attitudes (the normative governance of attitudes by statuses) is *cognition*: the case we began by considering. Kant taught us to think about representation in normative terms. A representing is a representing insofar as it is *responsible* for its correctness to how things are with what counts as represented by it just in virtue of its having that sort of *authority* over it. For Kant, the principal challenge in making sense of the *objectivity*—in the sense of their objective purport—of our cognitive representations is understanding how they are normatively governed by what they thereby count as representing. In the terms Hegel puts in play already in his *Introduction*, this is understanding the normative character of the relation between what things are *in themselves* and what they are *for consciousness*. That is the authority that how things implicitly are in themselves exercises over how they explicitly are for consciousness. What knowing and acting subjects are *in themselves* is their normative statuses, while what they are *for consciousness* (for themselves or for others) is a matter of normative attitudes (acknowledged or attributed, respectively). In the special case of cognition, what things are for consciousness also consists of attitudes, which are now to be understood as responsible to, normatively governed by, how objective things are in themselves. Hegel offers an expressive account of this semantic relation, which is in turn cashed out in terms of the process of recollection.

For this sort of normative governance of attitudes, too, is to be understood ultimately in terms of traditions consisting of recollectively rationally reconstructed attitudes. Any way things could be in themselves is already conceptually articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence to other possible states of affairs. Thus it is in shape to be the content of an attitude, to be grasped as how things are for consciousness. (The same

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contents can show up both in objective-alethic and subjective-deontic forms.) What for each recollection plays the role of noumenon, the referent represented with varying degrees of fidelity by the senses of all the recollected cognitive attitudes (phenomenal appearances of that noumenal reality) in the rationally reconstructed tradition of error and discovery, is itself something things can be for consciousness, a phenomenon, the content of a possible attitude. Rehearsing an expressively progressive trajectory whereby the sequence of appearances is seen to be normatively governed by the reality that emerges into explicitness through that rationally reconstructed experience of error is providing a phenomenology that in a distinctive way warrants the resulting cognitive commitments of the recollector.

In the cognitive case, what is confessed and forgiven is *error*—the deontic incompatibility of commitments that precludes proper entitlement to them. This is the part of the content of attitudes that—according to a particular only partially successful recollection of the tradition to which it belongs—is *not* norm-governed, is *incorrect* according to the governing norm, does *not* exhibit subjunctive sensitivity to the content of that norm. It is the residue of contingency that the recollection has not given the form of necessity, has not shown to be as it ought to be according to the governing norm. That there is always such a surplus, such a residue, is what the recollector must confess. What the contrite recollector trusts is that this failure, too, will successfully be forgiven by *edelmütig* recollectors yet to come—that this contingency, too, will eventually be given the normative form of necessity by being incorporated in the conceptual contentful norm that will then be seen as having governed the whole process, including the current, inadequate recollective rational reconstruction of it. That every recollection must leave some residue, some aspect of the attitudes it reconstructs as remnants of contingency (and so must confess its own need for recollective forgiveness) is the way sensuous immediacy overflows conceptual mediation. That is the source of the experience of error and failure that provides the normative demand that is the motor for change of commitment. But that each successive recollection that is itself retrospectively forgiven as expressively progressive gives the form of necessity to more of what had previously been visible only as contingent makes this same process the road of truth. That incorporation of immediate contingent particularity into mediated normative universal conceptual form is the source of the *determinateness* of the conceptual contents of doxastic

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attitudes. For it is an essential requirement of the norm that governs the process of determining those conceptual contents.

It is characteristic of self-consciousness operating according to the metaconceptual structure of *Verstand* (whose modern apex is expressed by Kant) to take determinately contentful conceptual contents for granted. Those contents are thought of as always already being *fully* determinate in the sense of having sharp boundaries, determining norms for correct application in all possible cases (“rails laid out to infinity”). It is characteristic of self-consciousness operating according to the metaconceptual structure of *Vernunft* (characteristic of the third, postmodern phase of *Geist*) to understand determinateness differently, in terms of the on-going, never-ending expressive process of further determining conceptual contents by recollectively incorporating previously recalcitrant concrete aspects of how things are (what really follows from what, what is really incompatible with what) into conceptual form: giving nonnormative contingency the normative form of necessity. The determinateness of objective reality manifests itself in the active restlessness of the conceptual norms that structure the attitudes of knowing and acting subjects. It is because the process in terms of which the determinate contentfulness of conceptual norms is ultimately intelligible (the process of determining them) has the magnanimous (*edelmütig*) recognitive form of *trust*—of an endless progressive spiral of confession of partial normative failure, recollective forgiveness of that failure, and confession of the partial failure of that forgiveness while trusting in future forgiveness—that Hegel’s account is properly describable as presenting a “semantics with an edifying intent.”

That the normative relations of authority and responsibility between representeds and representings (the relations between how things objectively are, in themselves, and how they subjectively are, for consciousness) are to be understood as a special case of the authority of normative statuses over attitudes is an explanatory prioritizing of the practical over the cognitive and of normative pragmatics over representational semantics. It is accordingly a kind of *pragmatism* about semantics. The norm governing cognitive doings is recollected as implicit in the experience of error—which, as the process by which conceptual content is progressively determined, is also the experience of knowing. It is something like the intention (in the technical sense of *Absicht*) to represent (refer to, know) how things are in themselves. According

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to Hegel's normative understanding of representational relations, the objective realm of conceptual contents articulated by alethic modal relations of incompatibility and consequence normatively governs the subjective realm of conceptual contents articulated by deontic normative relations of incompatibility and consequence. Cognitive attitudes are responsible to the facts they represent in the sense that those facts set the standard for recollective normative assessment of the correctness of the attitudes, and the attitudes must be recollected as subjunctively sensitive to those facts. The fact that these normative *representational relations* are to be understood ultimately in terms of the *recognitive process* and essentially *historical social practice* of magnanimous recollective forgiveness is *conceptual idealism*.

Agency in the age of trust reaches the heroic character—so striking in the original ancient form of agency—that was pushed out by the ironic distancing and alienation from norms essential to the achievement of individual self-consciousness that is the triumph of modern over traditional forms of normative life. Central to heroism was what Hegel calls “character”: the decisive *sittlich* identification of an individual agent with the norms, practically treating them as authoritative over and binding on one's attitudes. This is an acknowledgment of the status-dependence of normative attitudes, of one's attitudes as norm-governed. The ought-to-dos governing normative attitudes (acknowledged or attributed responsibilities) are understood as wholly determined by the ought-to-bes that articulate normative statuses (what someone is really responsible for or committed to: their duty). As a result, the heroic agent takes responsibility for every aspect of his act. If some feature of it is not as it ought to be, that is confessed to be the agent's responsibility, whether or not it was intended or foreseen. Compared to the contracted modern conception, the heroic conception makes the agent primarily responsible for a much-expanded deed, stretching out to include distant, unanticipated consequences. For this reason, traditional heroism is essentially tragic: it requires subjecting oneself to the dark, unknowable power of fate, identifying with what one is made by forces beyond one's knowledge and control. Shouldering the responsibility that fate in this sense brings down upon one who acts is tragic heroism.

Heroism in the age of trust is like heroism in the age of tragedy in its *sittlich* acknowledgment of the bindingness of norms, in the sense of their governing authority over normative attitudes, the status-dependence of those

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attitudes. There are norms that set standards for assessment of the correctness of our attitudes of acknowledging and attributing responsibility and authority, and it is the responsibility of each agent to be sensitive to those norms, shaping her attitudes accordingly. Each forgiving retrospective recollective rational reconstruction of an expressively progressive tradition of attitudes is responsible for discerning just such governing norms. And where the cramped and contracted modern practical conception of agency drew a bright line between normatively attributable and assessable aspects of each doing, and nonnormative ones—between what the agent can properly be held responsible for, because done knowingly or intentionally, and what is done only in the sense of happening because of such doings in the narrow sense—the trusting conception is heroic, like the tragic conception, in that responsibility is total. Responsibility is taken for the whole deed. There is no aspect of intentional doings that overflows and falls outside the normative realm of responsibility—no specification of the deed for which no one takes responsibility. The difference between the two forms of normative heroism is that in *Geist* with the recognitive structure of trust, responsibility for the deed is shared between the agent whose practical attitudes initiated the doing and the members of her recognitive community, who take it as their own by committing themselves to recollectively forgiving it.

Agency as understood and practiced within the magnanimous recognitive structure of confession and recollective forgiveness combines these two heroic aspects of the premodern conception: *sittlich* appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes and acknowledging total responsibility for the deed as consequentially extended beyond the knowledge and control of the agent. It can maintain a heroic expanded conception of the deed for which responsibility is taken because it has an expanded conception of who is responsible for each doing. Complementary recognitive attitudes both institute the governing norms and acknowledge the authority of the norms so instituted. The essentially historical fine structure of those reciprocally related recognitive attitudes and normative statuses articulates a division of normative labor between the individual agent whose practical attitudes initiate a self-conscious intentional doing, who takes responsibility for it in one sense, and members of the agent's recognitive community, who take responsibility for it in another sense. In this way the two essentially modern insights into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses and the

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distinction of responsibility marked by the individual agent's "rights of intention and knowledge" (the distinction between *Handlung* and *Tat*) are respected, and synthesized with the two principal features of premodern heroic agency.

But the *vernünftig*, trusting conception of agency as heroic does away with the element of tragic subjection to fate. Fate showed up as an alien, inhuman force in the tragic form of agency because it was a *nonnormative* force, one that though not itself governed by norms, nonetheless substantially shapes our normative responsibilities. What was left to us was bearing up and carrying on in the face of the incursions by alien fate into the properly normative realm in which we dwell. The postmodern neoheroic form of practical normativity replaces (normatively) blind fate with something we do for reasons. What *happens* is given the form of something *done*. Immediacy, contingency, particularity, and their recalcitrance to conceptualization are not done away with. But they now take their proper place. For we appreciate the necessary role they play in the process of determining the contents of the norms we both institute by our recognitive attitudes and acknowledge as governing that experiential process. The individual burdens of tragic subjection to fate are replaced by the communal recollective tasks of concrete magnanimous forgiveness. Where our normative digestion and domestication of immediacy, contingency, and particularity shows its limitations, when (as in each case at some point they must) they outrun our recollective capacity to incorporate them into the mediated, normative conceptual form of governing universals, that failure of ours is properly acknowledged by confession and trust in the forgiveness of that failure to fulfill our responsibilities, by more capable future recollectors.

The wounds of the Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind. The deed is not imperishable; it is taken back by Spirit into itself, and the aspect of individuality present in it, whether as intention or as an existent negativity and limitation, straightway vanishes. The self that carries out the action, the form of its act, is only a moment of the whole, and so likewise is the knowledge, that by its judgement determines and establishes the distinction between the individual and universal aspects of the action. [PG 669]

The responsibility the individual tragic heroic agent takes on himself is accordingly spread out and shared. The doing of each (in one sense) is now the doing of all (in another, recognitively complementary sense). For all share responsibility for each action. The distinctive role played by individual agents is not obliterated. For the responsibility acknowledged by and attributed to the initiating agent is different from the reparative and recollective recognitive responsibility undertaken by those who shoulder the burden of forgiving the agent. Every deed now shows up both as a practical contribution to the content of all that came before it, and as acknowledging a recollective responsibility with respect to all those deeds. The temporally extended, historically structured recognitive community of those who are alike in all acknowledging the authority of norms, confessing the extent of their failure to be norm-governed, acknowledging their responsibility recollectively to forgive those failures in others, confessing the extent of the failure of their efforts at recollective and reparative forgiveness, and trusting that a way will be found to forgive those failures, is one in which each member identifies with all the others, at once expressing and sacrificing their own particular attitudes by taking coresponsibility for the practical attitudes of everyone. It is the “‘I that is ‘We,’ the ‘We’ that is ‘I.’”