

Notes for Week 10

1. The big topic is **reductive naturalism**.

It is discussed under the heading of *Niederträchtigkeit* and.

It is introduced via the *Kammerdiener*.

The overall point is that norms are efficacious because and insofar as we *make* them be.

They are actualized only through our attitudes. But they can be *actualized*.

They govern our attitudes (the status-dependence of normative attitudes) insofar as we make them do that.

We don't need to *intend* to do that to do it.

But when we achieve adequate self-consciousness ("Absolute Knowing"), we *will* do it intentionally.

We do it by *recollection*.

As we'll see in the second half (Part II?), the final form of *recognition* is as *recollection*, as confession and forgiveness: trust.

Recollection not only *exhibits* the transcendence of attitudes by statuses and the government of attitudes by statuses (their setting standards for assessment of correctness, including representational correctness in cognition), it also *implements* it.

2. **This is how Hegel overcomes the threat—very real for Kant—of a norm/nature dualism** (a successor to a mind/body dualism).

It is in a sense a *naturalizing* of norms.

For it is at least a demystifying of them.

It is a kind of "compatibilism."

We can see how norms are brought into existence by the activities of *social, historical* discursive creatures.

"Nature and the world or history of spirit are the two realities. . . .

The ultimate aim and business of philosophy is to reconcile thought or the Notion with reality."

[*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Volume 3, p. 545]

The inability to do that is **alienation**.

Traditional life was immediately *sittlich*, and had no such difficulty.

It saw norms in nature, as part of nature.

But it did not see us as having any role in instituting them.

When we see that, the problem of how to relate them to nature arises.

3. There are two principal parables:

a) The *Kammerdiener* and the hero.

b) The breaking of the judge's hard heart.

These are dealt with in Parts I and II of Week 10.

4. Plan for Part I:
 - a) *Neiderträchtigkeit* and *Edelmütigkeit*
 - b) *Kammerdiener* v. hero passage
 - c) *Kammerdiener* as allegorical for:
 - alienation
 - genealogy,
 - reductive naturalism, and
 - individual egoism.
 - d) Four ways of understanding the difference:
 - Cognitive, objective: matter of fact.
 - Cognitive, subjective: stances.
 - Practical: making rather than finding disparity/unity.
 - Implicit: Finding and making explicit an antecedent implicit commitment.

5. Plan for Part II:
 - a) *Neiderträchtig* hard-hearted judgment assessing the agent as guilty.
 - b) Confession by the agent, agreeing with hard-hearted judge.
 - c) *Edelmütig* forgiveness of agent by judge.
 - d) Recollection is what one must *do* to forgive.
 - e) Confessing inadequacy of one's forgiveness.
 - f) Both confession and forgiveness are mutual.

6. Part III *would* be exposition of the postmodern theory of agency, as in the second half of my Aquinas lecture. But I don't want to rush that, and I don't think I could get all three parts on the table in one session. So I'll probably leave that discussion—which is in many ways the punchline of my reading—largely to the first part of next time.

Part I:

Genealogy and Magnanimity: The Allegory of the Valet

Plan for Part I:

- e) *Neiderträchtigkeit* and *Edelmütigkeit*
- f) *Kammerdiener* v. hero passage
- g) *Kammerdiener* as allegorical for:
 - alienation
 - genealogy,
 - reductive naturalism, and
 - individual egoism.
- h) Four ways of understanding the difference:
 - Cognitive, objective: matter of fact.
 - Cognitive, subjective: stances.
 - Practical-recognitive: making rather than finding disparity/unity.
 - Implicit: Finding and making explicit an antecedent implicit commitment.

I. Two Meta-Attitudes

An important perspective on the concept of alienation is provided by **two meta-attitudes that are in play throughout the final two-thirds of the *Spirit* chapter. Hegel's terms for these attitudes is "edelmütig" and "niederträchtig." Miller translates these as "noble" and "base" (or "ignoble"). I take it that a better way to think about the contrast is as that between "generous" and "mean-spirited," or "magnanimous" and "pusillanimous" (literally: "great-souled" and "small-souled").** Because the rich content they are to convey goes beyond that expressed by any of these labels, however, I will generally leave these terms in the German.

They are *meta-attitudes* because they are attitudes toward the relations between **norms** (or normative statuses such as commitments, responsibilities, and authority) and **attitudes** of acknowledging or attributing such norms *as* binding or applicable.

The *edelmütig* meta-attitude takes it that there really are norms that attitudes are directed toward and answer to. It treats norms as genuinely efficacious, as really making a

difference to what individuals do. It understands attitudes as norm-governed, in the dual sense that norms provide standards for assessments of the correctness of attitudes, and that attitudes are subjunctively sensitive to the contents of the norms. **Attitudes**—paradigmatically the acknowledgment or attribution of a norm as binding, taking oneself or another to be committed or responsible, practically distinguishing between performances that are appropriate and those that are not—are **the way the norms are actualized, the way they become efficacious, how they make things happen in the causal order.**

The *niederträchtig* meta-attitude sees only normative attitudes. The norms are construed as at most adverbial modifications of the attitudes: a way of talking about the contents of those attitudes by assigning them virtual objects. *Niederträchtigkeit* is the purest expression of the alienated character of modern normativity (hence culture, self-consciousness, and community).

The two meta-attitudes of *Edelmütigkeit* and *Niederträchtigkeit* are initially both manifestations of alienation because they seize one-sidedly on the unity of knowing-and-acting consciousness, in the one case, and the distinction that it involves, on the other.

Because the defining flaw of modernity is its failure to get the unity and the distinction that knowing-and-acting consciousness involve in focus together in one picture, the way forward to the reachievement of unalienated *Sittlichkeit* is a kind of higher *Edelmütigkeit*. On the theoretical side, that is coming to apply metaconceptual categories of *Vernunft*, rather than those of *Verstand*. Hegel’s account of what that consists in is the core achievement of his philosophy. As we draw closer to the end of his exposition in the *Phenomenology*, we get a new vantage point on that structure of unalienated understanding.

II. The *Kammerdiener*

“Kammerdiener” literally means “room servant.” It is usually translated into English as “valet.” I have discovered that this is not always a word German audiences recognize, so I have taken to leaving it in the original.

A saying of the time was “No man is a hero to his valet.”

Hegel famously added “But that is not because the hero is not a hero, but because the valet is a valet.”

The *Oxford Book of Aphorisms* reports this *bon mot* with the snarky observation that

“This somehow got itself said by Hegel.”

Why is no man a hero to his valet in the popular phrase (that is, before Hegel starts reading the allegory)?

There was a popular Napoleonic-era joke, which Hegel might well have been familiar with, that rudely but vividly expresses the thought behind the popular saying:

“The morning before a big battle with Napoleon’s troops, one Prussian general visits another in his tent as he is dressing. The general says to his valet:

“Hans, lay out my scarlet shirt and tunic.”

The other general asks:

“Is that to make you stand out to your troops, so they will know you are there leading them personally in the battle?”

“No,” the reply goes. “It is not to encourage them, but so that if I am wounded, perhaps badly, they will not see all the blood and be discouraged by my incapacity.”

The other general hurries back to his own tent and instructs his valet:

“Fritz, lay out my brown trousers.”

The first general might have been a hero to his valet. The second clearly was not.

The clearest expression of the new piece of the puzzle comes in a famous passage about “playing the **moral valet**.” “Valet” is “Kammerdiener,” and I call this crucial stretch of text “the *Kammerdiener* passage.” It expresses a cardinal form of *Niederträchtigkeit*, holding fast to the disparity that action involves:

[I]t holds to the other aspect . . . and explains [the action] as resulting from an intention different from the action itself, and from selfish motives. Just as every action is capable of being looked at from the point of view of conformity to duty, so too can it be considered from the point of view of the particularity [of the doer]; for, qua action, it is the actuality of the individual. This judging of the action thus takes it out of its outer existence and reflects it into its inner aspect, or into the form of its own particularity. If the action is accompanied by fame, then it knows this inner aspect to be a desire for fame. If it is altogether in keeping with the station of the individual, without going beyond this station, and of such a nature that the individuality does not possess its station as a character externally attached to it, but through its own self gives filling to this universality, thereby showing itself capable of a higher station, then the inner aspect of the action is judged to be ambition, and so on. Since, in the action as such, the doer attains to a vision of himself in objectivity, or to a feeling of self in his existence, and thus to enjoyment, the inner aspect is judged to be an urge to secure his own happiness,

even though this were to consist merely in an inner moral conceit, in the enjoyment of being conscious of his own superiority and in the foretaste of a hope of future happiness. No action can escape such judgement, for duty for duty's sake, this pure purpose, is an unreality; it becomes a reality in the deed of an individuality, and the action is thereby charged with the aspect of particularity. **No man is a hero to his valet; not, however, because the man is not a hero, but because the valet—is a valet,** whose dealings are with the man, not as a hero, but as one who eats, drinks, and wears clothes, in general, with his individual wants and fancies. Thus, for the judging consciousness, there is no action in which it could not oppose to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality, and play the part of the moral valet towards the agent. [PG 665; boldface added]

This is a rich and important passage. I see its significance as unfolding in a series of concentric, widening ripples, and I want to follow them as they broaden out from their center. To be a *hero* in the sense in play here is to act out of regard for one's duty. That is to have one's actions proceed from respect for or acknowledgment of the authority of norms. The hero is the one who acknowledges a norm as binding by actualizing it, who does what he ought, because he ought. To play the valet to such a hero is to impute only selfish, particular motives, to trace every action back to some perceived personal advantage, be it only a reputation for virtue, or, where even that is not available, the satisfaction of thinking well of oneself. In any case, only particular attitudes are acknowledged, not governing norms.

Consider the official who exercises state power. He has committed himself to act purely according to universal interests or norms. That is, he commits himself to doing *only* what acknowledgment of the norms requires. But every actual performance is a particular doing, and incorporates contingency. It is always *more* than just the acknowledgment of a norm, and may well also be *less* than that. (I can never *just* turn on the light or feed the poor—I am always *also* doing other things, such as alerting the burglar, or cutting the education budget or raising taxes.) Contingent motives and interests will always also be in play. Thus it will always be possible for the *niederträchtig* consciousness to point out the moment of disparity, the particularity and contingency that infects each action. It is never *just* an instance of the universal. The *Kammerdiener* can always explain what the hero of service did in terms of self-interested (hence

particular, contingent) motives and interests, rather than as a response to an acknowledged normative necessity. There is no action at all that is not amenable to this sort of reductive, ignoble description.

Broadening our horizons a little bit, I think we can see an issue being raised concerning the relations between norms and attitudes quite generally. **The *Kammerdiener* does not appeal to norms in his explanations of behavior. The attitudes of individuals are enough.** The public official says that he acted as he did because it was his duty. The *Kammerdiener* offers a competing explanation that appeals only to his desires. What his duty actually is, what he *ought* to do, plays no role in this account. Thought of at this level of generality, the moral-psychological valet stands for a kind of nihilism about norms I attributed last time to Gilbert Harman. According to this view, invoking moral norms or values is explanatorily otiose. For we can offer explanations of everything that actually happens in terms of people's *views* about what is right and wrong, what they *take* to be permissible or obligatory. It is those *attitudes* that are causally efficacious. And those attitudes—*believing* that it is wrong to steal, for instance—would have just the same causal consequences whether or not there were facts to which they corresponded, whether or not it is in fact wrong to steal. Because we do not need to appeal to norms, the best explanation of our actions and attitudes appeals only to attitudes. So we should conclude that there are no norms, only attitudes. This approach sees a massive error standing behind our ordinary ways of talking about norms.

III. The Authority of Normative Attitudes and Statuses

The issue here concerns the practical conception of the pragmatic notion of normative *force*. How should norms (what is or is not appropriate, correct, obligatory, or permissible) or normative *statuses* (responsibility, authority, commitment, or entitlement), on the one hand, be understood as related to normative *attitudes* (*taking* performances to be appropriate, correct, obligatory, or permissible, *acknowledging* or *attributing* responsibility, authority, commitment, or entitlement), on the other? The traditional, premodern view saw norms as independent and attitudes as dependent. The objective norms have authority over the subjective attitudes of individuals, which are supposed merely to reflect them, acknowledge their authority, apply them

in deliberation and assessment, judgment and action. The modern view sees attitudes as independent, and norms as dependent. The subjective attitudes individuals adopt *institute* norms.

The *Kammerdiener* banishes talk of values that are not immediate products of individual valuing. The rise of subjectivity is the practical realization that values are not independent of valuing. Quintessential alienated later modern genealogists such as Nietzsche and others such as the British utilitarians conclude that only valuing is real.

Taking it that the dependence of values on valuing implies that valuing is independent of values is a strategy of independence—which understands everything Humpty Dumpty’s way, as just a matter of who is to be Master. If norms are not immediately authoritative over attitudes, then attitudes must be immediately authoritative over norms. Practically applying categories of immediacy (mastery) in this way, epitomized in the *Kammerdiener*’s *niederträchtig* meta-attitude, is a pure form of *alienation* because it makes unintelligible the very acculturating, conceptual norms subjection to which makes even the *Kammerdiener* a discursive, *geistig* being: a knower, agent, and self. *Kammerdiener* explanations, which admit only normative attitudes, not only cannot make sense of normative *force*, but also in the end make the notion of conceptual *content* unintelligible. The relation between these is the topic of the last part of the *Spirit* section of the *Phenomenology*.

Moving from the practically alienating standpoint of *Verstand* to the practically *sittlich* standpoint of *Vernunft* **requires breaking out of the seeming inevitability of this restricted pair of alternatives—either norms are immediately, hence totally, authoritative over attitudes, or vice versa—by making intelligible the possibility of reciprocal dependence between norm and attitude.** To do that, it is not enough, of course, simply to mouth the phrase “reciprocal dependence between norm and attitude.” To make good on that phrase, Hegel offers a richly articulated metaconceptual apparatus laying out the nature of the complex interdependence of the authority of actual applications of concepts over the contents of those concepts and the responsibility of actual applications of concepts to the contents of those concepts. It requires reconceiving the relations between normative force and conceptual content in terms of a process of experience (a cycle of perception-and-action) that is at once the

institution and the application of conceptual norms, both a making and a finding of conceptual contents. His account of how that is possible requires the interaction of a social-recognitive dimension and a historical-recollective dimension, on the side of normative pragmatics, and an incompatibility-inferential and representational-referential dimension, on the side of semantics.

There is a third, still more general issue being raised by the *Kammerdiener*'s meta-attitude, beyond treating attitudes as purely independent of norms (which remain in the picture only in an adverbial capacity, in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to individuate the contents of the attitudes). That concerns **the relation between reasons and causes generally, or, still more abstractly, the place of norms in nature**. For the *Kammerdiener* essentially treats the hero of duty as a merely *natural* being. The only way of making the hero's actions intelligible that the *Kammerdiener* admits are of the sort that are available in principle for unacculturated creatures, those merely "immersed in the expanse of life." Though the wants attributed to the hero (for instance, the "inner moral conceit" that consists in "the enjoyment of being conscious of his own superiority and in the foretaste of a hope of future happiness") go beyond the biologically dictated desires of mere animals, the *Kammerdiener*'s view of the hero is as one who "eats, drinks, and wears clothes"—that is, at base, as a being driven by creaturely comforts and discomforts. **The most general issue Hegel is addressing in his discussion of the *Kammerdiener* is that of *reductive naturalism* about normativity.**

This sort of naturalism **is the most fundamental possible challenge to the Kantian picture of us as normative creatures**, as distinguished from the merely natural precisely by our subjection to norms, by the fact that we can bind ourselves by (make ourselves responsible to) norms, by applying concepts, whose contents settle *what* we have made ourselves responsible for and to. Is there really any such thing as authority or responsibility, as commitment or entitlement? Or is that sort of normative talk wholly optional and dispensable, indeed, a positively misleading mystification: a fundamental error of the sort of which Enlightenment accuses Faith? **For the *Kammerdiener* utilitarian, the work of Enlightenment is only half done when superstitious belief in a magical, invisible, supernatural objective Authority has been banished, so long as human behavior is still described in any terms that invoke norms not immediately derivable from the sensuous inclinations of desiring beings.**

The *Kammerdiener* stands for a *niederträchtig*, relentlessly naturalistic alternative to this *edelmütig*, normative description of concept use. In place of the picture of “heroic” practical sensitivity to norms—trying, in deliberation and assessment, to determine what is really correct, what one ought to do, what one is obliged to do (what “duty” consists in), acknowledging genuine normative constraint on one’s attitudes—this meta-attitude appeals *only* to attitudes, which are not construed as the acknowledgment of any normative constraint on or authority over those attitudes. Reasons are traded for causes. It is this large-scale, fundamental disagreement between the reductive naturalist and the rational-normativist that Hegel is committed to resolving in his discussion of what the *Kammerdiener* gets right, what he gets wrong, and what lessons we should learn from him. This project, broadly construed, is **to provide a response to Kant’s Third Antinomy—the challenge to integrate reasons and causes.** A significant proportion of Hegel’s claim to contemporary philosophical attention, I think, should be seen as deriving from his response to this issue of normative naturalism. So the stakes are very high.

IV. Four Meta-meta-attitudes

In order to see what the Hegelian account of the relation between normative pragmatic *force* (articulated by the distinction between norm and attitude) and semantic *content* adds to the story about the Hegelian version of the Fregean semantic distinction between *sense* and *reference*, it is important to be clear about the nature of the distinction between the two meta-attitudes toward the relations between norms and attitudes: *Niederträchtigkeit* and *Edelmütigkeit*. **There are four different ways of thinking about that distinction**—four different statures it can be taken to have. They are progressively more insightful and sophisticated, representing an expressive progression—the cumulative emergence into explicitness of implicit features of the relations between norms and attitudes—that corresponds to the stages by which Hegel sees Spirit as a whole developing its self-consciousness.

1. **Cognitive:**

The first way of understanding the relation between the *edelmütig* normativist and the *niederträchtig* naturalist is as a cognitive disagreement about a matter of objective fact. They disagree about the correct answer to the question: **Are there norms, or not?** If one makes an exhaustive catalog of the furniture of the universe, will one find norms on it, or only normative attitudes? On this way of construing it, the issue is put in a box with the question of whether there are leprechauns, and whether there is a bird in the bush. One or the other party to the dispute is wrong. **Who is right and who is wrong is settled by an attitude-independent matter of fact**—in the sense that whether there are norms or not is not reference-dependent on the meta-attitudes of the normativist or the naturalist. (For the normativist could be correct if it turned out that there are norms, but they are reference-dependent on normative attitudes.) On the side of epistemology, rather than ontology, the normativist takes it that normative attitudes are themselves cognitive attitudes, and that at least when things go right, they involve knowledge of norms. The hero may in fact know what his duty is and do it because it is his duty. The objectivist meta-meta-attitude to the issue takes it additionally that both the normative and the naturalist attitudes are themselves cognitive attitudes, only one of which can be right about what there really is.

2. **The stance stance. Compatibilism.:**

This objectivist, cognitivist way of understanding the status of the two meta-attitudes toward norms and normative attitudes is not the only one available, however. It is possible to adopt instead an almost diametrically opposed subjectivist meta-meta-attitude. According to this way of thinking, the normativist and the naturalist employ different vocabularies in describing the world. Using one rather than the other is adopting a *stance*. The two stances are incompatible; one cannot adopt them both. One either uses normative vocabulary or one does not. But both of them are available, and both of them are legitimate.

Just as every action is capable of being looked at from the point of view of conformity to duty, so too can it be considered from the point of view of the particularity [of the doer]. [PG 665]

As for the legitimacy of the reductive, *niederträchtig* attitude, Hegel acknowledges that the *Kammerdiener* is *not wrong*.

No action can escape such judgement,” there is no action in which it could not oppose to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality, and play the part of the moral valet towards the agent. [PG 665]

Every intentional action is “charged with the aspect of particularity,” in that the agent must have had some motive for performing it, some attitude that was efficacious in bringing it about. Norms are efficacious only through attitudes toward them, so one can always short-circuit explanations that appeal to the norms the attitudes are directed toward (what the agent ought to do, her duty), appealing only to the attitudes themselves. In the broader reading, I take it that Hegel is acknowledging the possibility of purely naturalistic descriptions of the world, including human actions.

Just so, “every action is capable of being looked at from the point of view of conformity to duty”—that is, in the *edelmütig* normative vocabulary. What shows up in the causal-psychological vocabulary of the *Kammerdiener* is nature, natural beings, and natural processes: the world of desire. What shows up in the normative vocabulary of the hero is Spirit, *geistig* beings, and discursive practices: the world of recognition. The realm of Spirit comprises experience and agency. It is a structure articulated by relations of *authority* and *responsibility*, of *commitment* and *entitlement*, of *reasons* and *concepts* with the *obligations* and *permissions* that they involve and articulate. This normative, discursive realm of Spirit is Hegel’s topic. (The book is titled *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, after all.) It, too, is real. According to the stance (meta-meta-attitude), the reductive naturalist is wrong to take it that the explanatory completeness of the naturalistic-causal vocabulary in its own terms indicates its expressive completeness—so that any claims it cannot express cannot be true. For it must leave out concept-use as such (and hence the whole *geistig* dimension of human activity), even though every application of concepts in judgment and action can be explained in naturalistic terms, if it is described in naturalistic terms of noises and motions. But the normative vocabulary is *also* sovereign and comprehensive within its domain, and can achieve a corresponding explanatory equilibrium. For it is a vocabulary for describing the use of vocabularies—including the

vocabulary of natural science. Everything the scientist does, no less than the activities and practices of other discursive beings, can be described in the language of judgment, intentional action, and recognition. The *Kammerdiener*'s attitude, too, is a *discursive* attitude.

One of the great questions of modernity—transposed into a new key by Kant's normative reconceptualization—concerns the relation between Spirit and Nature.

As Hegel says at the end of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*:

“Nature and the world or history of spirit are the two realities. . . . The ultimate aim and business of philosophy is to reconcile thought or the Notion with reality.”¹

One strategy for doing that is to see the naturalistic and normative vocabularies as incommensurable, but as each providing a legitimate, valid, in some sense comprehensive perspective on things. They are understood as just expressing different features of things. The choice of which to employ in any particular case can then be understood to be pragmatic in the classical sense: a matter of what best conduces to securing the ends and interests motivating the subject making the choice of vocabulary at the time. Rather than disagreeing about an objective matter of fact, the naturalist and the normativist are seen as expressing different subjective preferences, adopting different attitudes, which reflect different interests. Whichever vocabulary one adopts makes possible genuine knowledge of some aspect of how things really are.

There is something right about this pragmatic, perspectival way of construing the relations between what is expressed by normative and naturalistic vocabularies. But the conception of *Niederträchtigkeit* and *Edelmütigkeit* as still basically *cognitive* stances misses something essential to Hegel's approach.

When he introduces it, Hegel said that the *niederträchtig* meta-attitude “clings to the **disparity** between the two essentialities” [PG 501]—the distinction that action and (actual) consciousness involve. This is a partial, one-sided attitude.

The *edelmütig* meta-attitude **seizes one-sidedly instead on the complementary moment of unity or identity**. We have seen various ways of conceptualizing these formal aspects of discursive activity, corresponding to different ways of thinking of what is

¹ Volume 3, p. 545, in the Haldane and Simpson translation of 1896 (repr., Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983).

distinguished or united. Judging and acting are species of concept-application. So they involve a distinction between a universal and a particular to which it is applied, and their unity in an individual: a particular as characterized by a universal. The universal is the concept being applied, what sets the standard of correctness of the judgment or action.

A kind of **Nominalism**: On the broad construal, the *niederträchtig* attitude does not admit that there are standards of correctness (norms) in play at all. **The particulars are actual and real, the universals are illusory.** There are no genuine individuals that really unite universals and particulars. The issue comes up explicitly for intentional action; the *Kammerdiener* does not admit that what is done can be acknowledgments of the bindingness of a norm, can be simply an application of it to a particular. There are just particular performances, but no question of them genuinely falling under norms according to which they can be assessed. Judgments and actions as such are visible only from the *edelmütig* point of view, which discerns the unity, and hence the content, of consciousness and action.

3. **Recognitive Practical Meta-attitudes:**

So far, this characterization is compatible with a purely cognitive reading of the two meta-attitudes. But immediately after the *Kammerdiener* passage, Hegel says of the moral valet:

The consciousness that judges in this way is itself base [*niederträchtig*], because it divides up the action, producing and holding fast to the disparity of the action with itself. [*PG 666*]

Adopting the *niederträchtig* meta-attitude not only holds fast to the “disparity of the action with itself,” but “divides up the action” and produces the disparity. This sounds much more practical than cognitive—a matter of making something, not just finding something. But in what sense does the moral valet *produce* the disparity? It cannot be that what he produces is the “distinction that action implies.” [*PG 400*] For that distinction—between achievement and intention, between the context of assessment and the context of deliberation, between particular performance and universal conceptual norm that sets a standard for correctness for it—is a ubiquitous and essential part of the metaphysical structure of action. That distinction is not a product of modern alienation. **Alienation is only one structure that a practical conception of that distinction can take. That alienated structure of agency is what the *Kammerdiener***

produces by adopting the reductive *niederträchtig* attitude, which denies that knowers and agents are genuinely sensitive to conceptual norms.

The claim is that **adopting the *niederträchtig* normative meta-attitude institutes a kind of normativity that has a distinctive, defective structure.** To say that is to say that *Niederträchtigkeit* is in the first instance a kind of *recognition*, rather than of *cognition*. After all, recognition in general is taking someone to be a subject of normative statuses and attitudes (hence a knower and agent), and specific recognition is attributing particular normative statuses and attitudes. The magnanimous historian, who takes the hero to be genuinely sensitive to and acknowledging norms beyond his own desires, *recognizes* the hero in a very different sense than does the one who plays the moral valet to him. Just so, Enlightenment's taking Faith to consist in a simple cognitive mistake is taking up a *recognitive* stance to Faith. It not only makes a cognitive mistake when it takes Faith's defining commitments to be cognitive rather than recognitive (belief in the existence of a peculiar kind of thing rather than instituting a community of trust), it also commits a recognitive injustice:

Faith . . . receives at [Enlightenment's] hands nothing but wrong; for Enlightenment distorts all the moments of faith, changing them into something different from what they are in it. [PG 563]

To faith, [Enlightenment] seems to be a perversion and a lie because it points out the otherness of its moments; in doing so, it seems directly to make something else out of them than they are in their separateness. [PG 564]

Its ungenerous, *niederträchtig* failure to recognize Faith's recognitive achievement *changes* that achievement, *making* it less than it would be if properly acknowledged. By adopting that attitude, playing the moral valet to Faith, refusing proper recognition, Enlightenment rejects community with Faith, makes impossible the reciprocal recognition that would institute a community exhibiting the structure of trust, and pushes the corresponding sort of self-consciousness out of reach.

The moral valet does not just *notice* or *point out* the disparity that action and consciousness involve, he *identifies* with it. For his recognitive act is also a recognitive

sacrifice. What the *Kammerdiener* gives up is the possibility of a certain kind of self-consciousness: consciousness of himself as genuinely bound by norms. The principled grounds he has for refusing to recognize the hero as a norm-governed creature apply to himself as well. **His position is that the idea of someone practically acknowledging a norm as binding is unintelligible.** This characterization may seem wrong, at least for the narrow, literal construal of the *Kammerdiener* story. After all, he does attribute practical reasoning, and hence concept-use to the hero—just nothing that is not immediately self-serving, the satisfaction of some actual, contingent, motivating desire. So he does in some sense recognize the hero as a discursive being. But the claim will be that this is an unstable kind of recognition. If all anyone can do is fulfill felt desires, then concept-use is not in the end intelligible as such. Normative *attitudes* are not in the end intelligible as contentful apart from the norms that identify and individuate their contents. What the *Kammerdiener* is *doing* by adopting the *niederträchtig* recognitive stance is *making* his own and others' performances and practices into something that is unintelligible as *discursive*.

The third construal of the *niederträchtig* and *edelmütig* meta-attitudes toward norms and normative attitudes is then that they are recognitive attitudes that have the effect of *practical commitments*. Adopting the *edelmütig* stance of spirit is committing oneself to *making* what we are doing being binding ourselves by conceptual norms, so acknowledging the authority of such norms, by practically *taking* it that that is what we are doing—by recognitively treating ourselves and our fellows as doing that. On this view normativity (which, because the norms in question are for Hegel all *conceptually* contentful, is the same phenomenon as rationality) is not feature of our practices independent of our practical meta-attitude toward it. “To him who looks at the world rationally, the world looks rationally back,” Hegel says.² **Normativity and rationality are *products* of our *edelmütig* meta-attitudes, of our practically taking or treating what we are doing (recognizing each other) as acknowledging rational commitments.** Spirit exists insofar as we *make* it exist by *taking* it to exist: by understanding what we are doing in normative, rational terms. We make the world rational by adopting the recognitively structured constellation of commitments and

² Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, published in English as *Reason in History*, trans. Robert S. Hartmann (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1953), p. 13.

responsibilities I have—following Hegel’s usage in connection with the community Faith is committed to instituting—denominated *trust*. As we will see, this means that Spirit is brought into existence and sustained by our recollective commitment to rationally reconstruct the tradition of experience in Whiggish terms—finding trajectories through it that are expressively progressive, that exhibit what we have been doing as the unfolding into explicitness of norms that were all along implicit.

Recollection in this sense is a kind of *recognition*: one recognizes others as heroes—as acknowledging norms in their attitudes, both in deliberation and in assessment.

4. **Edelmütigkeit as always already implicit:**

This third understanding of the meta-attitudes of *Niederträchtigkeit* and *Edelmütigkeit*, as practical, recognitive, hence community- and self-constitutive, like the second, still presents them as options available for the subject freely to choose between. It is up to us whether to make ourselves into merely natural or genuinely normative beings. On this account, Hegel might be urging us to not to make the *Kammerdiener*’s choice, but he is not claiming we are compelled to do so. There is, however, a fourth way of understanding the status of these two stances. Its leading thought is that we have always already implicitly committed ourselves to adopting the *edelmütig* stance, to identifying with the unity that action and consciousness involve, to understanding ourselves as genuinely binding ourselves by conceptual norms that we apply in acting intentionally and making judgments. For we do judge and act, and we cannot avoid in practice taking or treating those judgments and actions as being determinately contentful—as materially incompatible with certain other judgments and actions, and as materially entailing still others. We count some judgments as reasons for or against others, and some intentions and plans as ruling out or requiring others as means. Even the *Kammerdiener* and his resolutely reductive naturalist generalization offer contentful *accounts* of our doings (performances and attitudes), accounts that aim to satisfy the distinctive standards of intelligibility, adequacy, and correctness to which they hold themselves. *If* the determinate contentfulness of the thoughts and intentions even of the *niederträchtig* is in fact intelligible *only* from an *edelmütig* perspective, *then* anyone who in practice treats what he is doing as judging and acting is implicitly committed thereby to *Edelmütigkeit*. The semantic theory that I have been extracting from the *Phenomenology* has as its conclusion the antecedent of that conditional.

If that is all right, then the apparent parity of the two metanormative stances is an illusion. No genuine choice between them is possible. By talking (engaging in discursive practices) at all, we have already implicitly endorsed and adopted one of them, whether we explicitly realize that or (like the *Kammerdiener*) not. On this reading, what Hegel is asking us to do is only to *explicitly* acknowledge theoretical and practical commitments we have already *implicitly* undertaken just by taking part in discursive practices—which is to say, by being acculturated. Explicitly adopting the *edelmütig* practical-recognitive attitude is accordingly just achieving a certain kind of self-consciousness: realizing something that is already true of ourselves. So the issue is, in the end, in one sense a broadly cognitive one: a matter of finding out how things in some sense already are. But the achievement of this definitive kind of self-consciousness is also, as must be so according to Hegel’s social account of what self-consciousness consists in, the adoption of a distinctive kind of recognitive relation to others and to oneself.

The realization that ***Edelmütigkeit* simply consists in doing explicitly what one has implicitly committed oneself to do by adopting discursive attitudes and engaging in discursive practices** also exhibits that recognitive attitude as a *moral* necessity, in a sense that develops a Kantian idea. (This is part of the reason Hegel’s expository development of his novel positive account of the shape of **an explicitly *edelmütig* reciprocal recognitive relation** closes the section titled “Moralität”).

Kant seeks to ground moral imperatives in the presuppositions of rationality and discursivity, hence of normativity and the sort of positive freedom that consists in being able to bind oneself by conceptual norms. His thought is that whatever can be shown to be a necessary condition of being a knower and agent at all is thereby shown to have a grip on us that is unconditional in the sense of not being relative to any particular endorsement or commitment of ours, whether theoretical or practical.

Hegel tells a different story than Kant does about the relations between treating *others* as one minimally must in order to be treating them as rational, discursive, norm-governed, free beings (that is, recognizing them), on the one hand, and one’s self-consciousness *as* oneself rational, discursive, norm-governed, and free. But he takes over the idea that recognizably *moral* norms are to be derived from the presuppositions of discursivity in general. Self-recognition,

recognizing oneself, treating oneself as a discursive being, as able to undertake determinately contentful commitments, exercise determinately contentful authority and so on, requires recognizing others: attributing that kind of responsibility and authority to them. Any practical or theoretical presupposition of *that* is a structural presupposition of one's own self-consciousness. That is the source of moral requirements on how we treat others.

Transposed into the key of Hegel's expressive idiom, edification concerning what is necessary shows up as the making explicit (*für sich*) of what it is already implicitly (*an sich*) committed to. Doing that always has both a cognitive aspect of finding out how things already really were (in themselves) and a recognitive aspect of self-transformation and constitution of oneself as **a new kind of self-consciousness.**

The second allegory aims to help us understand that new kind of self-consciousness.

End of Part I

Part II:

Confession and Forgiveness, Recollection and Trust

Plan for Part II:

- a) *Neiderträchtig* hard-hearted judgment assessing the agent as guilty.
- b) Confession by the agent, agreeing with hard-hearted judge.
- c) *Edelmütig* forgiveness of agent by judge.
- d) Recollection is what one must *do* to forgive.
- e) Confessing inadequacy of one's forgiveness.
- f) Both confession and forgiveness are mutual.

I. *Niederträchtig* Assessment

The final movement of the long *Spirit* chapter of the *Phenomenology* is discussed in its **concluding eleven paragraphs**. It is here that Hegel sketches the way forward out of modernity to a more adequately self-conscious structure of recognition, and so of selves, norms, and communities. The text that describes the transition to the third stage in the development of Spirit is gnomic, dark, and allegorical. It takes the form of a parable, a narrative recounting sequential stages in the relationship between an “evil consciousness” [PG 661] and a “hard-hearted judge” [PG 669–670]: evil [PG 661–662], judgment [PG 662–666], confession [666], refusal of reciprocal confession [PG 667–668], the breaking of the hard heart and confession by the judge [PG 669], forgiveness [PG 669–671], and 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])

Our task is to read the allegory—in this case, so as to understand the nature of **this final form of mutual recognition as reciprocal confession and forgiveness**. Unlike the earlier stories, this one outlines something that has not happened yet, a **future** development of Spirit, of which Hegel is the prophet: the making explicit of something already implicit, whose occurrence is to usher in the next phase in our history.

The two parties to this morality tale, the judged and the judging consciousness, **personify the two social perspectives on the application of concepts** in judgment and exercises of

practical agency that are familiar to us from our consideration of Hegel's theory of action. These are **the first-person context of deliberation and the third-person context of assessment**. The one judged makes himself responsible, by applying a concept, and the judge holds him responsible for that application. The relations between the judging and the judged individuals are **recognitive** ones: the relations that articulate their self-consciousness and structure their community.

As our story begins, the recognitive attitudes in virtue of which the acting consciousness is denominated "evil" or "wicked" [böse], and the judge "hard-hearted," are *niederträchtig* ones.

The consciousness that judges in this way is itself base [niederträchtig], because it divides up the action, producing and holding fast to the **disparity** of the action with itself. [PG 666]

The first observation to make is that one way recognition can be nonreciprocal or nonsymmetrical is if the norms that are applied by the people who are **deliberating** about what to do and justifying what they are doing are not the same norms that are applied by the people attributing those doings and **assessing** those justifications.

Against this background, let us look at what Hegel says about how the judging consciousness applies different standards to the assessment of action than does the agent himself. "The consciousness of an act declares its specific action to be a duty." [PG 665] This is how the agent justifies his action: by saying (here using Kantian terminology) that it falls under a norm, that it is correct or required. Doing this is exhibiting a normative attitude, portraying what is done as an acknowledgment of a norm as binding. In a certain sense, this attitude is the end of the matter for the agent. He can do only what he *takes* to be his duty. When he has settled that, he has settled what to do. His normative attitude, his *acknowledgment* of a commitment, is the form in which his normative status, what he is really committed to, shows up for him. "Conscience" [Gewissen] is Hegel's term for the metanormative conception according to which that attitude ought also to settle things (be authoritative for) those who *assess* the correctness of what the agent does. As long as he did what he *took* to be his duty, he acted conscientiously (i.e., out of respect for duty), and that is supposed to be the only basis on which he can be assessed. Having seen the fatal structural flaw in this strategy—the way the notion of duty goes missing in it—we (the phenomenological "we," Hegel's readers) are

moving on to consider a successor strategy that does retain a difference between the context of assessment and that of appraisal.

Now the judging consciousness does not stop short at the former aspect of duty, at the doer's knowledge of it that this is his duty, and the fact that the doer knows it to be his duty, the condition and status of his reality. On the contrary, it holds to the other aspect, looks at what the action is in itself, and explains it as resulting from an intention different from the action itself, and from selfish motives. Just as every action is capable of being looked at from the point of view of conformity to duty, so too can it be considered from the point of view of the particularity [of the doer]. . . . No action can escape such judgement, for duty for duty's sake, this pure purpose, is an unreality; it becomes a reality in the deed of an individuality, and the action is thereby charged with the aspect of particularity. . . . Thus, for the judging consciousness, there is no action in which it could not oppose to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality, and play the part of the moral valet towards the agent. [PG 665]

It is from the point of view of such a judging consciousness, assessing the conformity of a performance to duty, that the performance—*any* actual performance—shows up as *wrong*, and the acting consciousness as *bad*. The concept of evil in play here is of actions that disregard normative considerations of what the agent ought to do, what it would be right to do, and respond only to the agent's personal wants, desires, and other attitudes. In this case, assessing the doing as evil is taking it *not* to have been performed out of a pure respect for duty—that is, not being just the application of a norm, the acknowledgment of a commitment. We know enough by now to see that **the problem is going to be with the “purity” required of the purpose: that the action stem from “duty for duty's sake” alone.** An insistence on those characteristics expresses an understanding of authority on the one-sided model of independence (mastery): unless *only* the norm is authoritative, unless it is *wholly* authoritative, it cannot be understood as authoritative at all.

But what, exactly, is the content of the indictment delivered by the judging consciousness and, at the next stage in the parable, confessed by the acting consciousness? I think we should understand it as comprising **two related, but distinct claims.**

•**First**, and most obviously, it is always possible to offer a reductive, *Kammerdiener*'s account of the etiology of an action in terms of attitudes rather than norms, inclinations rather than obligations, causes rather than reasons (“selfish motives,” “particularity,” “the personal aspect”). We need not accept the agent’s claim to be sensitive to norms, reasons, the standards of correctness for the application of concepts. **In place of a kantian explanation in terms of what are often called “external reasons,” we can always give a humean explanation in terms of “internal reasons”:** appeal to the subjective desires of the agent as motives instead of to the agent’s obligations as reasons. From this point of view the agent shows up not only as bad, in the sense of not really responsive to norms, but also as hypocritical. [PG 663–664] For it *claims* to be responsive to norms. But in fact—according to the *niederträchtig* assessment—it is responsive really only to its own inclinations and attitudes. The claim is that counterfactually, if the norms determining the content of one’s real commitments *were* different, but one’s attitudes and inclinations were the same, one *would* act in the same way.

So what should one count as sensitive to?

Because norms are actually efficacious only via attitudes, it is always possible to see agents as sensitive only to their own attitudes. Construing that fact as implying that those attitudes are not properly to be understood as acknowledgments of *commitments*, as applications of (bindings of oneself by) conceptual *norms*, is *Niederträchtigkeit*.

•**Second**, Hegel characterizes the *niederträchtig* judge as **holding to the moment of disparity** that action necessarily involves, looking “at what the action is in itself,” what is actually achieved, rather than what it is for the agent, “and explains it as resulting from an intention different from the action itself.”

It is part of the basic metaphysics of agency that **one can never merely fulfill a purpose.** Whatever one does admits of an indefinite number of specifications.³ The *niederträchtig* assessor and attributor of the doing rejects the authoritativeness of the agent’s privileging

³ “Action, in virtue of the antithesis it essentially contains, is related to a negative of consciousness, to a reality possessing intrinsic being. Contrasted with the simplicity of pure consciousness, with the absolute other or implicit manifoldness, this reality is a plurality of circumstances which breaks up and spreads out endlessly in all directions, backwards into their conditions, sideways into their connections, forwards in their consequences.” [PG 642]

of one of these (indeed, often, as we have seen, one that is not even true of what was done, but stands to those that are true only in a much weaker, retrospectively discerned, broadly anaphoric relation) as what he was trying to do.

The judge exercises his own authority, attributing and holding the agent responsible for the action under a different kind of description, seeing it not as the acknowledgment of a norm but only as the evincing of an attitude of desire or inclination.

By acting this way, **the judge in fact adopts an asymmetrical cognitive stance** toward the agent.

For he insists on his own authority over action-specifications, while not acknowledging any corresponding authority on the part of the agent. And that asymmetry is the direct result of understanding authority and responsibility on the model of independence: as precluding *any* kind of reciprocal dependence (taking authority to be incompatible with any correlative responsibility).

The *Kammerdiener*'s sort of assessment is always possible, and **in the expressively progressive parable of confession and forgiveness, the agent himself eventually comes to assess his own actions this way. He confesses to being evil**—confesses that his apparent respect for the norms (universals) is a guise for the pursuit of personal (particular) ends. Adopting this reductive naturalistic characterization of his own doings is the *ne plus ultra* of alienation. For the self-consciousness that makes this confession (recognizing itself in *niederträchtig* terms) becomes unintelligible to itself as a creature and creator of norms, hence as a knower and agent at all. The reductive stance acknowledges only attitudes. It is not just that the indefinite multiplicity of unique circumstances accompanying every particular candidate for application of a conceptual norm makes it impossible to be sure whether it is correct to apply the universal to that particular, what one's use of that term commits one to do, and so what attitude one would be *justified* or *entitled* to adopt by the norms in play. It is rather that **the very idea of a norm that settles the question one way or another for novel cases (the idea of normative "rails laid out to infinity") seems unintelligible**—a metaphysical, rather than an epistemic problem. Instead of genuine conceptual norms, which, when applied by adopting an attitude toward them, institute genuine normative statuses, paradigmatically commitments, there are just cases where a term has been applied in the past (by oneself and by others), cases where such

application has been withheld, and the inclinations and dispositions that various practitioners have as a matter of fact acquired in response to those prior uses, in the context of how they are all wired up and trained. Using a term in some cases and not others is expressing a practical attitude. But on this reductive conception, it is not a *normative* attitude. There are no norms in play that could determine what one was really committing oneself to by doing so (what normative status one had undertaken by adopting that attitude).

This is **genealogy**: the counterfactuals also point to the reality and explanatory sufficiency of attitudes rather than norms. *Had* individual practitioners, as a result of their own particular, contingent motivations, applied terms differently in the past, their heirs *would* be disposed to apply them differently now. Current attitudes (uses) are sensitive to past attitudes (uses). No notion of normative necessity (what one has *reason*) to do emerges from this picture of massive contingency, in which current applications are explicable in terms of “what the judge had for breakfast.” In this sense it is attitudes “all the way down.” This reductive naturalism is the culmination of modern alienation. In it, what was all along the dark side of the implicit core of modernity—its discovery of the constitutive significance of individual attitudes—comes into the explicit light of day.

As Hegel tells the story, the acting consciousness, which “declares its specific action to be duty,” and **both the judging and the confessing consciousnesses**, which explain actions in terms of nonnormatively characterized motives (attitudes), **see the issue about which they disagree as a cognitive one**: a matter of who is right about an objective fact. Is the agent in fact acknowledging the bindingness of a norm (being sensitive to a normative necessity), or merely responding to other attitudes (so the performance belongs in a box with other phenomena explicable by appeal to contingent matters of fact)? Is naturalism about motives true? If it is, then it applies in the context of assessment just as much as in the context of deliberation, and so to the judge who assesses and attributes actions as much as to the agent who produces them. If the agent cannot intelligibly be supposed to be undertaking commitments, acknowledging norms as binding, binding himself by norms, trying to do what is right, then neither can the judge. Or again, if the fact that one *can* adopt the *Kammerdiener* stance means that one *must* (that that is

the right way to think of things) in the case of the consciousness being assessed, why does not the same thing apply to the consciousness doing the assessing?

But at this stage in the parable, the judging consciousness “is hypocrisy, because it passes off such judging, not as another manner of being wicked, but as the correct consciousness of the action.” [PG 666]

The judge takes it that though the acting consciousness is evil, responding to the particular rather than the universal, the contingencies of his subjective situation and dispositions rather than acknowledging what is normatively necessary, he himself *is* responsive to the universal, to norms. What the judge says is *correct*, the *right* way to describe what is going on, the way one is *obliged* to think about it. The judge still takes it that he can “oppose to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality,” because *he* still perceives that universal aspect. **So the assessor and attributor of actions applies quite different standards to his own activities than he does to those of the ones he assesses. This is an *asymmetrical recognitive relation*.**

II. Confession

The first step toward a symmetrical, genuinely reciprocal interpersonal recognitive relation is taken by the individual who is judged, who *confesses* its particularity and the contingency of its attitudes. [PG 666] Confessing is acknowledging and accepting the correctness of the indictment of the *niederträchtig* judge. It is a speech act, because “language as the existence of Spirit . . . is self-consciousness existing for others,” [PG 652] “it is the self which as such is actual in language, which declares itself to be the truth, and just by so doing acknowledges all other selves and is acknowledged by them.” [PG 654] The content of the confession is accordingly something like this:

I confess that my judgments and actions have not been just what I was obliged or permitted (committed or entitled) to do by the norms implicit in the concepts applied therein; they were not simply responses acknowledging the normative necessity embodied in those concepts. They also express, reflect, and are sensitive to my subjective attitudes—the doxastic and practical commitments, the particular contingent

course of experience I have undergone, the beliefs that I have contingently acquired and rejected or retained during this historical-experiential process of development, my contingent practical ends, projects, and plans and their evolution—everything that makes me the distinctive individual I am. They are, in the end, *my* commitments, *my* attitudes, shot through and through with particularity that is not a mere reflection of the universals I took myself to be applying.

To say that is to express the structural distinction and disparity that cognition and action involve. That is the distinction between what things are for consciousness and what they are in themselves.

What is confessed is that what things are *for consciousness* is not just whatever they are *in themselves*. What things are for me is influenced not only by what they are in themselves, but also by considerations particular to my actual, embodied subjectivity: the residual effects of the contingent trajectory of my training and experience, collateral attitudes, inclinations, concerns, and emphases of attention. Indeed, my decision to apply or not apply a given concept in some actual circumstances can be explained by appeal to such contingencies concerning prior applications of concepts, quite apart from consideration of the true content of the conceptual norm being applied, the norm I in fact bound myself by in the sense that makes it relevant to assessments of correctness and success.

Making such a confession is *identifying* with that structural disparity that knowing and acting consciousness involves. For it is *sacrificing* the claim to entitlement for or justification of the judgment or action by appeal to the content of the conceptual norm being applied. **It is identification with one's own attitudes (particularity), rather than with the normative statuses (universality)** that are adopted in virtue of applying concepts, binding oneself by norms (universals). That universal dimension is no longer acknowledged as being in play—only attitudes. So **the confessor, too, adopts a *niederträchtig* attitude, now toward his own commitments.** Like the judge, he “opposes to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality.” Doing that is a step toward the achievement of mutual, symmetrical recognition, because the confession consists in adopting the standards of assessment deployed by the judging consciousness, ceasing to insist on his own. And that means that the same standards are brought to bear by the agent as by the assessor—even though they are

niederträchtig ones, basely identifying with the disparity of form that cognition and action involve, rather than nobly identifying with their identity of content.

Next step:

But there is a **residual asymmetry**. For **if the *Kammerdiener's* reductive naturalism is correct, then it applies to the judge too.**

Perceiving this identity and giving utterance to it, he confesses this to the other, and equally expects that the other, having in fact put himself on the same level, will also respond in words in which he will give utterance to this identity with him, and expects that this mutual recognition will now exist in fact. [PG 666]

Yet the judge need not (though he ought) acknowledge this identity. He can persist in applying different standards to the concrete actions of others than he does to his own assessments: understanding what they do genealogically, as the result of peculiarities of their particular cognitive-practical experiential trajectory, while understanding his own judgments just as correct applications of universals, whose determinate contents necessitate those applications. The details of his own breakfast, he insists, are irrelevant to his assessment.

The confession of the one who is wicked, "I am so," is not followed by a reciprocal similar confession. This was not what the judging consciousness meant: quite the contrary. It repels this community of nature, and is the hard heart that is for itself, and which rejects any continuity with the other. [PG 667]

At this stage, the judge in the allegory does not appear as impartially applying universals, simply responding appropriately to their normative demands. **What he is doing shows up as adopting a *stance***, rather than just cognitively apprehending how things objectively are. For he *decides* to adopt a *different* stance toward his own sayings and doings than he does to those of others.

This is an optional attitude on his part.

Further, in "rejecting any continuity with the other" he is adopting a *recognitive* stance: rejecting an offer of reciprocal recognition.

That is a further kind of doing, for which he is responsible.

Hegel says:

As a result, the situation is reversed. The one who made the confession sees himself repulsed, and sees the other to be in the wrong when he refuses to let his own inner being come forth into the outer existence of speech, when the other contrasts the beauty of his own soul with the penitent's wickedness, yet confronts the confession of the penitent with his own stiff-necked unrepentant character, mutely keeping himself to himself and refusing to throw himself away for someone else. [PG 667]

The hard-hearted judge is doing what he originally indicted the other for. He is letting particularity affect his application of universals: applying different normative standards to doings just because they happen to be *his* doings. And in doing so, he is *producing* a recognitive disparity, allowing his particular being-for-self (attachment to his own attitudes) to disrupt the achievement of a community (universal) by reciprocal recognition.

It is thus its own self which hinders that other's return from the deed into the spiritual existence of speech and into the identity of Spirit, and by **this hardness of heart produces the disparity which still exists.** [PG 667]

What is normatively called for—in the sense that it would be the explicit acknowledgment (what things are for the judge) of what is implicitly (in itself) going on—is a reciprocal confession. That would be the judge's recognition of himself in the one who confessed.

(As the Firesign Theatre puts it: "We're all bozos on this bus.")

For "[t]he breaking of the hard heart, and the raising of it to universality, is the same movement which was expressed in the consciousness that made confession of itself." [PG 669]

The judge's acknowledgment that his judgments, too, can be explained as resulting from contingent features of his experience, that everybody is in the same boat in this regard, would be a *sacrifice* of his particularity—his attachment to his own prior attitude of privileging himself over others in the standards of assessment he applies—**that is an identification with and production of a symmetrical recognitive unity or identity, rather than a recognitive disparity.**

Reciprocal confession is not yet the achievement of absolute Spirit, [PG 670]
"the true, i.e. the self-conscious and existent, equalization of the two sides," [PG 669]
however, so long as what is achieved is just **reciprocal *Niederträchtigkeit*.**

Having a whole community of knowers and agents symmetrically and even-handedly playing the moral valet to each other—reciprocally confessing the justice of assessments of the sort originally made by the hard-hearted judge—does not yet abolish alienation, but only raises it to the level of universality.

For **norms are still invisible**. And because they are, so are attitudes as *normative* attitudes.

What people are doing is not intelligible as acknowledging and attributing commitments, binding oneself and taking others to be bound by norms.

So the reciprocal *niederträchtig* recognitive attitudes are not intelligible as *normative* attitudes either, but only as natural states of individuals (inclinations, dispositions), causally brought about by and bringing about other such states.

From this point of view, the performances individuals produce cannot properly be seen as intentional doings or claims to knowledge, nor the individuals as agents or knowers, hence not really as self-conscious selves.

What they are for themselves is accordingly not yet what they are in themselves.

III. Forgiveness

The stage is set for the transition to the next and final stage in the development of self-conscious Spirit by the allegorical judge traversing the four meta-meta-attitudes laid out in my previous lecture:

- a) First, the judge acknowledges that he is adopting a *stance*, rather than simply acknowledging a *fact*;
- b) Second, the judge acknowledges that the stance is a *recognitive* one;
- c) So the judge acknowledges that which stance he adopts *produces* a community of a certain kind;
- d) Next, the judge must acknowledge that acting and judging (acknowledging and attributing, deliberating and assessing) implicitly presuppose (are intelligible only in the context of) *edelmütig* recognitive stances.

e) Finally, the judge must explicitly adopt such a recognitive stance and institute an *edelmütig* recognitive community.

Edelmütigkeit, generosity or magnanimity, the noble recognitive stance that contrasts with the mean-spiritedness or pusillanimity, *Niederträchtigkeit*, the base recognitive stance, consists in treating oneself and others in practice as adopting normative statuses, rather than just changing natural states.

Achieving the kind of self-consciousness that overcomes the alienation distinctive of modernity and moves us decisively into the postmodern phase in the development of Spirit requires first realizing that in taking or treating ourselves and each other as selves, as able to make claims expressing beliefs and pursue plans expressing intentions, we are *implicitly adopting edelmütig recognitive attitudes*.

Then we have to **adopt such attitudes explicitly**, acknowledging those commitments as governing norms in practice. That requires more than confession, even reciprocal confession.

In Hegel's allegory, what it requires is *forgiveness*. Hegel introduces this notion in the **penultimate paragraph** of *Spirit*:

The **forgiveness** which it extends to the other is the **renunciation of itself**, of its unreal essential being which it put on a level with that other which was a real action, and acknowledges that what thought characterized as bad, viz. action, is good; or rather it abandons this distinction of the specific thought and its subjectively determined judgement, just as the other abandons its subjective characterization of action. The **word of reconciliation** is the objectively existent Spirit, which beholds the pure knowledge of itself qua universal essence, in its opposite, in the pure knowledge of itself qua absolutely self-contained and exclusive individuality—**a reciprocal recognition which is absolute Spirit**. [PG 670]

Forgiveness [Verzeihung] is a recognitive attitude that practically acknowledges the complementary contributions of particularity and universality to individuality—both the way the application of the universal raises the particular to the level of the individual and the way application to particulars actualizes the universal in an individual. It is a practical, community-instituting form of self-consciousness that is structured by the metaconceptual categories of *Vernunft*, rather than *Verstand*. It is *sittlich*, rather than alienated, in understanding the complex interdependence of norms (universals, on the side of content; necessity, on the side

of force) and attitudes and the process by which together they institute and articulate normative statuses (commitments). It is, in short, what ushers in the form of community Hegel calls “absolute Spirit,” and the form of self-consciousness he calls “absolute knowing.” Understanding this is what the whole *Phenomenology* has been aiming at: “that one far-off divine event, toward which the whole creation moves.”

The key question we must ask in order to extract the point of the allegory then is: What is it one must *do* in order to qualify as *forgiving* an individual for an action—the application of a concept? As a way of thinking about what could count as an answer to this question, think by analogy of the corresponding question asked about another key concept, that of identification. What, we asked, must one *do* in order to count as *identifying with* some aspect of what one is *for* oneself, rather than with something one actually is, *in* oneself (paradigmatically, with something normative rather than natural, oneself as authoritative and responsible, rather than as alive)? And the answer was: One must be willing to *risk* and if need be *sacrifice* the one for the other.

Appealing to this model, a more specific way of putting the question before us now is:

What is to *forgiving* as *sacrificing for* is to *identifying with*?

IV. Recollection

The most important clues concerning the nature of forgiveness are contained in a few gnomic, aphoristic sentences:

Spirit, in the absolute certainty of itself, **is lord and master over every deed and actuality**, and can cast them off, and **make them as if they had never happened**. [PG 667]

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. [PG 669]

The invocation of **mastery** indicates that the **forgiving** that accomplishes this healing is the exercise of some sort of **constitutive authority**: the capacity of **making** something so by **taking** it to be so.

The “wounds” are the contingent particular attitudes (“the aspect of individuality”) and the errors and failures they bring about (“existent negativity and limitation”), which are confessed. The question is what one must do in order to “cast them off and make them as if they had never happened,” to heal the wounds, “leaving no scars behind,” what the forgiving individual must do in order to count as having successfully exercised that constitutive healing authority.

I think the answer is that ***forgiveness is a kind of recollection*** (*Erinnerung*—cf. [PG 808]). What one must do in order to forgive the confessor for what is confessed is to offer a **rational reconstruction of a tradition** to which the concept-application (theoretically in judgment or practically in intention) in question belongs, in which it figures as **an expressively progressive episode**.

Telling such a story is a substantive undertaking, one that the magnanimous (*edelmütig*) would-be forgiving assessor may well not be able to accomplish.

Indeed, what the assessor *confesses*, in his turn, is his subjective inability successfully to forgive everything he is committed to forgiving.

By way of a model, think of the situation of the judge at common law. The judge is charged with deciding whether a novel set of facts warrants the application of a concept, according to the norm implicit in the tradition of prior applications of it and its inferential relatives that he inherits from previous judges. **What a judge who makes such a decision confesses is that his decision could be explained by what he had for breakfast—or, less figuratively, by attitudes of his that are extraneous to the facts at hand and the law he is applying: by features of his training, reading, or mood, by the cases he happens to have adjudicated recently, the political climate, and so on.**

More generally, **he confesses that the *Kammerdiener* would not be wrong about him**, in that his decision to apply or not to apply the universal (concept) to these particulars can be explained by appeal just to factors that are *contingent* in the sense that they are not acknowledgments of the *necessity* that is the normative force articulated by the actual content of the concept. The genealogical counterfactuals are true.

He confesses that one need not see his decision as suitably responsive to the content of the norm he is supposed to supply, which is what would *justify* the decision. For one can instead

see it as *caused* by various extraneous circumstances. The decision is infected with “the aspect of individuality.” For collateral attitudes that just *happen* to be acknowledgments of commitments by the same individual affect his decision as to whether to apply the concept in each new case. In making such a confession the judge need not admit (and for the confession to be in order it need not be true) that he was not in the new case *trying* or *intending correctly* to apply the norm (universal, concept) he inherited. Rather, what is confessed is that the result of doing that expressed what the content of the concept was *for him*, rather than just what it was *in itself*, an appearance to him of the reality, rather than the reality itself. What drives a wedge between the two is precisely that his decisions are always in part responsive to contingencies of his particular subjective attitudes, circumstances, and prior experience. It follows that the confession is also an acknowledgment of the necessity and ubiquity of the distinction that consciousness and action involve, the “negativity” that shows up when one finds oneself with incompatible commitments, an acknowledgment that concept application necessarily has the shape of the experience of error and failure (“limitation”).

For a later judge concretely to *forgive* the earlier judge is to incorporate the decision that was the subject of confession into a retrospective rational reconstruction of the tradition of applying the concept in question, as having *precedential* significance.

Doing that is recharacterizing and re-presenting the content of the concept (what it really is, what it is in itself) as gradually emerging into the daylight of explicitness through a sequence of applications of it to novel cases, each of which reveals some hitherto hidden feature of it, and exhibiting the forgiven judge’s decision as having played that role.

From the point of view of such a reconstructive recollection, **though the decision might have been caused by contingent subjective attitudes and justificatorily irrelevant circumstances, *what* was so caused was an application that was both correct and expressively progressive.**

That is, it was just what was needed for us to find out more about the real content of the concept. The experience of incompatibility is exhibited in its capacity as the engine of conceptual, cognitive, and practical *progress*, rather than in its capacity as the mark of error and failure.

Forgiving is the recollective labor of finding a concept that is being expressed (now less, now more fully and faithfully) by the conceptions endorsed by those whose judgments and actions are being forgiven.

Characterizing recollecting as forgiving emphasizes that it is not only a *cognitive* and *practical* enterprise—reconstruing judgments and actions—but also the adoption of a *recognitive stance* toward the ones whose judgments and actions are so construed. As a recognitive relation, the *edelmütig* stance is an *identification* with that higher unity. By contrast, the *niederträchtig* stance is identification with the moment of disparity that consciousness and agency necessarily involve: the collision of incompatible commitments that eventually shows the inadequacy of each set of cognitive and practical commitments and the conceptions that articulate them. Speaking of the relation between the individual who confesses and the individual who forgives, Hegel says:

But just as the former has to surrender its one-sided, unacknowledged existence of its particular being-for-self, so too must this other set aside its one-sided, unacknowledged judgement. And just as the former exhibits the power of Spirit over its actual existence, so does this other exhibit the power of Spirit over its determinate concept [seinen bestimmten Begriff]. [PG 669]

What is “surrendered” or “set aside” is *sacrificed*. What the one who confesses gives up is his “particular being for self,” his “actual existence.” That is to say that he ceases to assert the authority of his actual attitudes, acknowledging that he has bound himself by an objective conceptual norm that differs from his subjective conception of it. For that authority was not recognized or acknowledged. What the judge relinquishes is his insistence on the authority of his hard-hearted assessment, which, as a one-sided assertion of disparity was also not reciprocally acknowledged. Sacrificing the authority of these one-sided, subjective attitudes—what things are for one—is identifying with what one has sacrificed for: what things are in themselves, the content that unifies the disparate forms in which it was expressed (showed up for individual consciousnesses). Both sides acknowledge that what recollectively shows up as what was really being talked or thought about (the objective concept) has authority over their attitudes and

applications of the concept (subjective conceptions). Unlike the attitudes that each sacrifices, *this* authority *is* acknowledged by both. Recognition as confession and forgiveness is reciprocal.

The one who confesses “exhibits the power of Spirit over its actual existence” by acknowledging that in adopting particular attitudes—contingent and explicable by causes or nonnormatively characterizable impulses and motives though they may be—he has nonetheless succeeded in binding himself by (making himself responsible to) objective conceptual norms, and so instituted normative statuses (undertaken commitments, both cognitive and practical, by applying those norms) whose content outruns his subjective conceptions of them. The forgiving judge “exhibits the power of Spirit over its determinate concept” by recollectively reconstruing the content of that concept, so as to show it as authoritative over subjective conceptions and attitudes. Magnanimous forgiving recollection is the exercise of the power of Spirit over the determinate concept. Hegel summarizes, in the penultimate paragraph of *Spirit*:

The forgiveness which it extends to the other is the renunciation of itself, of its unreal essential being which it put on a level with that other which was a real action, and acknowledges that what thought characterized as bad, viz. action, is good; or rather it abandons this distinction of the specific thought and its *subjectively* determined judgement, just as the other abandons its subjective characterization of action. The word of reconciliation is the *objectively* existent Spirit, which beholds the pure knowledge of itself qua universal essence, in its opposite, in the pure knowledge of itself qua absolutely self-contained and exclusive individuality—a reciprocal recognition which is *absolute* Spirit. [PG 670]

Even though the recollecting event of forgiving must, in the paradigmatic case, come later than the recollected event forgiven, forgiving as a cognitive relation between *agents* could still be symmetrical and reciprocal. You and I might simultaneously forgive each other’s earlier confessed transgressions. As William Blake has it: “Through all eternity, / I forgive you, and you forgive me.” But recognition need not be *synchronic* in order to be *symmetrical*. A conceptual tradition can exhibit a symmetrical cognitive structure of reciprocal authority and responsibility *diachronically* too. In our model of judges determining conceptual contents by developing case law, the present judge exercises authority over past applications of a legal

concept, assessing their correctness by accepting (or rejecting) them as precedential, which is acknowledging them as having genuine normative authority over future applications. Finding a way to construe the conceptual content in such a way that an earlier ruling—even one that can be explained perfectly well by what the judge had for breakfast—is displayed both as correct according to the binding norm the earlier judge inherited and as revelatory of some hitherto obscure aspect of the concept is the paradigm of a forgiving recollection and magnanimous specific recognition. But that authority of the present judge to recognize is balanced by her responsibility to the past. For her entitlement to that authority derives wholly from her claim to be not innovating (clothing contingencies of her own attitudes in the guise of necessity), but *only* applying the conceptual norms she has inherited. The quality of her recollective rational reconstrual of the tradition is the only warrant for the authority she claims for her own assessments and applications of the concept. And that responsibility of the present judge to the past—to the actual content of the concept in question—is administered by future judges, who will assess in turn the precedential authority of the present judge’s construal of precedent, in terms of its fidelity to the content they recollectively discern as having been all along implicitly setting the standards of correctness of applications and assessments of applications of the concept. So the recognitive authority of the present judge with respect to past judges is conditioned on its recognition in turn by future ones.

Next step: Confessing inadequacy of one’s forgiveness:

The reciprocal recognitive structure of confession and forgiveness is of this diachronic, historical type. When concept users have fully achieved the sort of semantic self-consciousness that Hegel gives us the metaconcepts for (the philosophical categories of *Vernunft*), we will each confess that our applications of concepts and assessments of such applications are no doubt influenced by contingencies of our collateral subjective attitudes and stray causal factors of which we are not aware or not in intentional control. And we will each acknowledge our (*edelmütig*) commitment to find ways concretely and specifically to forgive in the judgments and actions of others what first shows up as the confessed disparity between what things are for those concept-users and what they are in themselves—ways to display their applications of concepts as precedential. This is acknowledging commitment to a new *kind* of recognition of others. **And we will also confess that this recognitive commitment, too, exhibits the disparity that**

consciousness and action involve: the disparity between what we are committed to do and what we actually do. That is, we confess that we have not succeeded in fulfilling this recognitive commitment. We are not capable of retrospectively bringing about the total unity of norm and actual performance in each case we are committed to forgive. Our recollective reconstrual of the contents of the concepts involved inevitably fails to exhibit *every* use as correct and expressively progressive. We confess that though our generous, forgiving recollective recognitive spirit is willing, our flesh is weak. We have not fully healed the wounds of the Spirit, have not made the aspect of particularity present in every actuality wholly vanish, have not made the disparity of all the deeds as if it had never happened.

Those confessions, both of residual ground-level disparity of norm and actual attitude and of the higher-level recognitive failures adequately and completely concretely to forgive the confessed failures of others are themselves petitions for recognition in the form of forgiveness. The focus of the parable of the hard-hearted judge and the breaking of his hard heart, with which Hegel closes *Spirit*, is the normative expectation, on the part of the one who confesses, of forgiveness from those who judge him. Confession is not just a *petition* for recognition as forgiveness, it is the assertion of a *right* to recognition through forgiveness. It creates a *responsibility* to treat the one who confesses generously, and not meanly, not to play the moral valet. This is the responsibility to reciprocate recognition. By using *forgiveness* as the axis around which revolves the parable he uses to introduce the final form of reciprocal recognition, Hegel is intentionally invoking the central concept of Christianity, and depending on its epitome in the petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass before us."⁴

V. Trust (and Magnanimous Agency)

Confession and forgiveness are both at base performances that express backward-looking attitudes. Hegel's telling of his parable of recognition does not include an explicit term for the forward-looking attitude that is the recognitive *petition* for forgiveness, with its attendant

⁴ Matthew 6:9–13. A variant is at Luke 11:2–4.

institution of a corresponding cognitive *obligation* to forgive on the part of those to whom it is addressed. I use the term “trust” for that purpose. In confessing, one not only expresses retrospective acknowledgment of the residual disparity in one’s beliefs and actions between what things are in themselves and what they are for one, between norm and subjective attitude; one also expresses prospective trust in others to find ways of forgiving that disparity, forging / finding a unity of referent behind the disparity of sense, healing the wound. Such trust is an acknowledgment of dependence on others for recognition in the form of forgiveness.

Trusting is both acknowledging the authority of those trusted to forgive and invoking their responsibility to do so. Prospective trust that one will be forgiven for what one confesses is the cognitive attitude complementary to forgiveness. Together these reciprocal practical attitudes produce a community with a symmetrical, *edelmütig* cognitive structure. The choice of the term “trust” is motivated by Hegel’s use of it [Vertrauen / vertrauen] to describe what was progressive about Faith, in spite of the cognitive errors for which it stands condemned by Enlightenment: the reciprocal cognitive structure of the religious community.

Whomsoever I trust, his certainty of himself is for me the certainty of myself; I recognize in him my own being-for-self, know that he acknowledges it and that it is for him purpose and essence. [PG 549]

I take it that this describes the cognitive ideal Hegel foreshadowed already when he first introduced the notion of reciprocal recognition in *Self-Consciousness*:

With this, we already have before us the Notion of Spirit. What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is—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]

The kind of individual self-consciousness and community cognitively synthesized by prospective trust and recollective forgiveness are an “I” and a “we” that are identical in Hegel’s holistic, “speculative” sense: distinct, but mutually presupposing elements whose relations articulate a larger unity, and which are unintelligible apart from the role they play in that whole. This new sort of cognitive structure is unalienated, *sittlich*, in virtue of the division of normative labor it exhibits between the “I” and the “we.” The mistake characteristic of

modernity was the practical conviction that justice could be done to the essential contribution of the actual activities and subjective attitudes of individuals to the institution of normative statuses—their authority over what they are responsible for—only if those individuals are conceived of as wholly *independent*: as fully and solely authoritative, as *constitutively* authoritative. Within the confines enforced by the atomistic metaconceptual categories of *Verstand*, the sense in which what I believe and do is up to me could be acknowledged only by identifying practically just with whatever is *entirely* up to me. For independence (authority) is so understood as to be incompatible with any and every sort of dependence (corresponding responsibility).

Part III:

Part III *would* be exposition of the postmodern theory of agency, as in the second half of my Aquinas lecture. But I don't want to rush that, and I don't think I could get all three parts on the table in one session. So I'll leave that discussion—which is in many ways the punchline of my reading—to the first part of next time.

Maybe a sketch here of that view, if there is time.

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**.

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 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 meta-norm that governs recollective performances (and the practical attitudes they express) is that the norm one reconstructively discerns or imputes must normatively govern *all* the consequential specifications of attitudes 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 co-responsibility for it.

Forgiving, 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.”

Any actual recollective story will involve strains: elements of what is actually done, at *every* stage in the developing process, that *cannot* be smoothly, successfully, or convincingly given such a norm-responsive explanation.

As an 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 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). 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 hermeneutic recollecting dimension of the recognitive attitude of forgiveness that they address a performance that expresses a *prior* practical attitude.

The doing being forgiven must already be underway.

For this reason, the final, *vernunftlich* form of reciprocal recognition as confession and forgiveness is essentially *historical*.

The attitude-governing norms it institutes and acknowledges have the rich diachronic cognitive form of *traditions*.

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.

Agency as understood and practiced within the magnanimous cognitive structure of confession and forgiveness **combines these two heroic aspects of the pre-modern 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.

The burdens of tragic subjection to fate are replaced by the tasks of concrete magnanimous forgiveness.

Where our normative digestion 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 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 in a real sense the doing of all** (in another, cognitively complementary sense).

For all share responsibility for each action.

The temporally extended, historically structured cognitive community of those who are alike in all confessing the extent of their failure to be norm-governed, acknowledging their responsibility to forgive those failures in others, confessing the extent of their efforts at recollective and reparative forgiveness, and trusting that a way will be found to forgive their failures is one in which each member identifies with all the others, taking co-responsibility for their practical attitudes.

It is the “‘I’ that is ‘we’, the ‘we’ that is ‘I’.” *PG* §177.

End of Part III