



universität
wien

Department of Philosophy

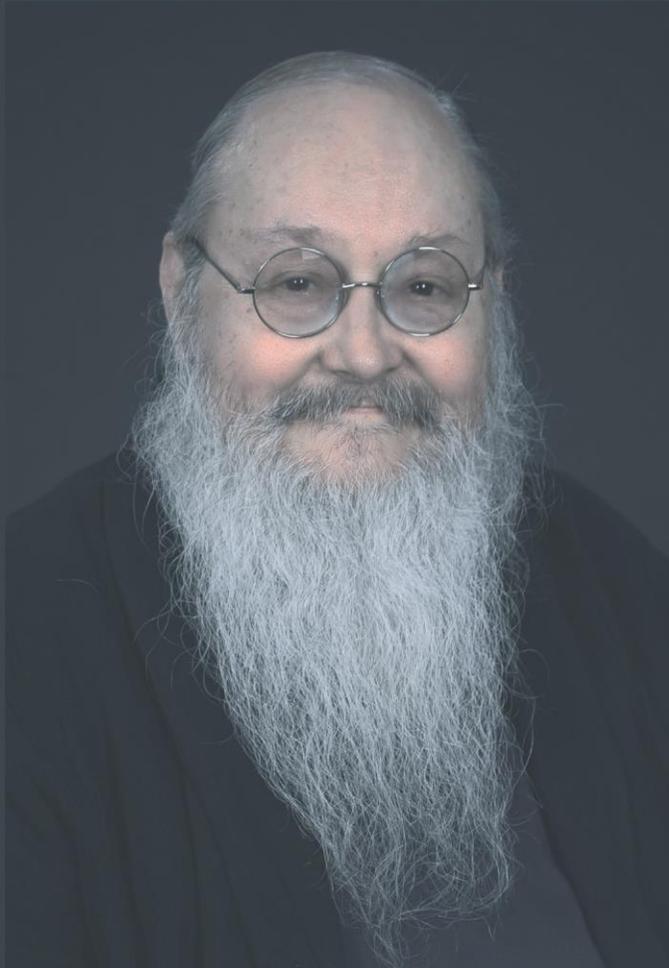
Franz Brentano Lectures on Practical Philosophy

Prof. Dr. Robert Brandom

(University of Pittsburgh)

**Recollection and Recognition:
Semantic and Practical Dimensions of Hegel's *Phenomenology***

April 8 - 9, 2019



2019 Brentano Lectures, University of Vienna
Robert Brandom

Recollection and Recognition:

Semantic and Practical Dimensions of Hegel's *Phenomenology*

Lecture 1:

The Fine Structure of Autonomy and Recognition:

The Institution of Normative Statures by Normative Attitudes

Lecture 2:

Representation, Expression, and Recollection

Lecture 3:

Magnanimity, Heroism, and Agency:

Recognition as Recollection

Recollection and Recognition:
Semantic and Practical Dimensions of Hegel's *Phenomenology*

2019 Brentano Lectures, University of Vienna

Lecture 1:

**The Fine Structure of Autonomy and Recognition:
The Institution of Normative Statures by Normative Attitudes¹**

I. Introduction

In these three lectures here I will present in contemporary language what I take to be Hegel's most important ideas about discursive normativity. He thinks discursive norms are both essentially *social* and essentially *historical*. Under the first heading, he thinks that norms are instituted by reciprocal *recognition*. This is his model of how normative *statures* can be instituted by practical normative *attitudes*, when those attitudes are suitably socially articulated and complemented. Under the second heading, he thinks that norms are instituted by the exercise of a distinctive kind of retrospective, *recollective* rationality. The *social* dimension of discursive normativity, he thinks, necessarily includes a *historical* dimension. The ideas of recognition and recollection are two of Hegel's biggest ideas.

¹ This lecture is adapted from *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*, forthcoming from Harvard University Press, 2019.

His story about their intimate relations, the sense in which they are two sides of one coin, is at the center of what I think we can learn from him today.

My central focus in this lecture is Hegel's idea that norms are instituted by *reciprocal recognition*. But I'll start with Kant's *autonomy* version of this idea. What I most want to accomplish in this lecture is to introduce the metavocabulary for discussing normativity that I'll be using throughout these three lectures. In the next one, I'll move from general normative *pragmatics* to the norms specific to *semantics*. That requires adding to the social notion of recognition the historicist notion of recollection. In my third lecture, I'll return to practical normativity, and situate all these ideas in the larger sweep of Hegel's thought.

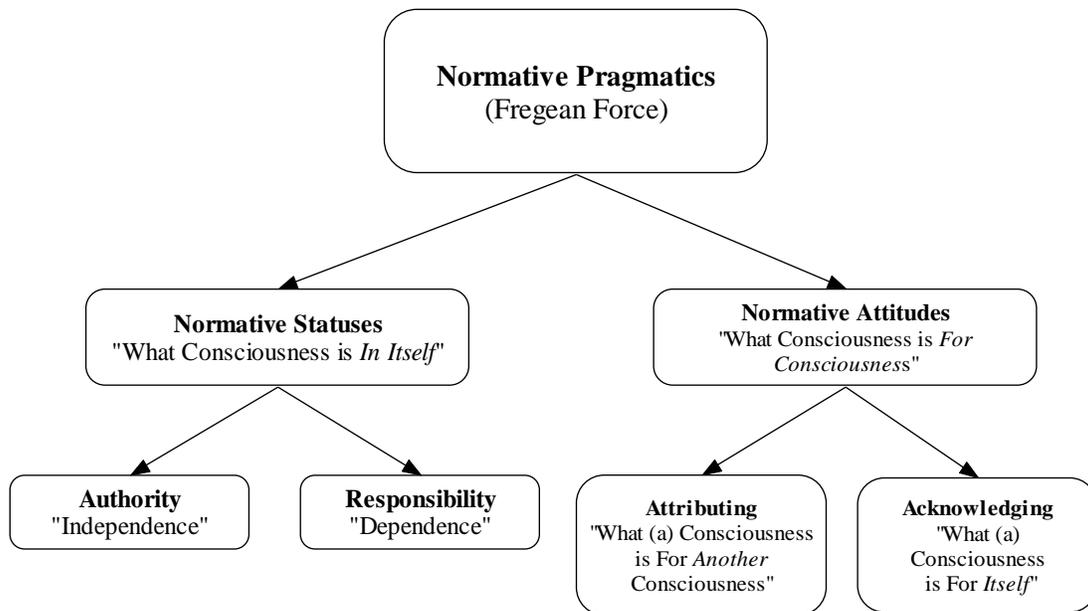
II. Normative Statures and Normative Attitudes: A Regimented Idiom

First, a few preliminaries:

The aim of this lecture is to develop a regimented idiom and model to explore the development in normative pragmatics (the theory of what corresponds to Fregean "force") that takes us from Kant to Hegel. At its base is the distinction between normative statures and normative attitudes. In the idiom of the regimentation, this distinction corresponds to Hegel's distinction between *what consciousness is in itself* and *what consciousness is for consciousness*. Hegel also distinguishes, within the domain of what consciousness is for consciousness, between what a consciousness is for *another* consciousness and what a consciousness is for *itself*. This distinction is rendered in the present model by distinguishing two sorts of normative attitudes, in terms of the different social perspectives they embody: *attributing* a normative status (to

another) and *acknowledging* or claiming a normative status (oneself). This additional distinction within the category of normative attitudes is matched in the model by a distinction within the category of normative statuses. This is the distinction between *authority* and *responsibility*. It corresponds, according to the interpretation being presented here, to Hegel's use of the terms "independence" and "dependence" ("Unabhängigkeit"/"Abhängigkeit") when they are applied to the *subjects* of consciousness rather than the *objects* of consciousness.

The structure envisaged is accordingly the following:



Elements of the model are in bold.

Modeled Hegelian phrases are in quotes.

So, in the regimented idiom of the model, the paradigmatic normative statuses are identified as responsibility and authority, or commitment and entitlement. The attitudes in question include

attributing these statuses to another, and acknowledging or claiming them oneself. I am claiming that the vocabulary of this regimentation is not far from that Hegel himself uses, however.

Though the concern of the *Self-Consciousness* chapter is ultimately with the *subjects* of normative attitudes and statuses, those attitudes and statuses also have *objects*. On the side of attitudes, what is attributed or acknowledged is just statuses of authority and responsibility. One normative subject, X, can attribute authority or responsibility to another, Y. X is then the *subject* of the attitude, the normative status attributed is the *object* of the attitude, and the subject *to* whom the status is attributed is the *indirect object* or *target* of the attribution. So, for instance, in Hegel's terminology one consciousness can be independent or dependent not only *in itself*, but also *for itself* or *for another consciousness*. In the case of acknowledgments, the subject and the target are the same—not just *de facto*, but *de jure*, as part of what it means for the attitude in question to be *acknowledgment*. Acknowledgments are to be distinguished from self-attributions, in just the way that essentially indexical uses of first-person pronouns express, by contrast to forms of contingent self-reference. So attitudes of acknowledging practical commitments can, in the central case, *be* intentional doings.

Normative statuses of authority and responsibility also have both subjects and objects. The subject of the status is the normative subject who is authoritative or responsible. The objects are what they have authority over or responsibility for. Our concern here is with the fundamental case where what one has the authority or responsibility to do (what one is entitled or committed to do) is adopt normative attitudes of attributing or acknowledging further normative statuses. The fact that the objects of normative attitudes can be normative statuses, and the objects of

normative statuses can be normative attitudes means that complex constellations of basic attitudes and statuses are possible. It is in these terms that I will suggest we ought to understand both the Kantian individualistic *autonomy* model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes and the Hegelian social *recognition* model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes, and the way in which the latter develops elaborates and develops the former (the sort of *Aufhebung* it is).

III. The Kantian Autonomy Model of the Institution of Normative Statuses by Normative Attitudes

If we start with two basic normative statuses, normative independence and dependence as authority and responsibility, and two basic normative attitudes, attributing responsibility or authority to another and acknowledging or claiming responsibility or authority for oneself, and think about them in the context of the idea that normative statuses might be not just dependent on normative attitudes but instituted by them, then an important compound of statuses and attitudes becomes visible. Kant's construal of normativity in terms of autonomy is at base the idea that rational beings can *make* themselves responsible (*institute* a normative *status*) by *taking* themselves to be responsible (*adopting* an *attitude*). His idea (developing Rousseau's) is that so long as the attribution of responsibility is self-consciously self-directed, that is, so long as it takes the form of *acknowledgment* of oneself *as* responsible, it is *constitutive*, in the sense that adopting that attitude is sufficient, all by itself, to institute the status.

What is it for an attitude of claiming or acknowledging responsibility to be *constitutive* of the status of responsibility it claims or acknowledges—that it *immediately* (that is, all by itself, apart from any other attitudes) *institutes* that status? As the object of an attitude, as what is acknowledged or attributed, a normative status such as responsibility or authority has a kind of virtual existence. There need not in general be an actual status corresponding to the attitude. One subject might wrongly attribute a responsibility to another, or claim an authority she herself does not in fact possess.

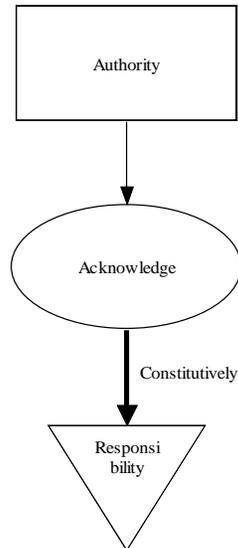
Kant's conception of normative subjects as autonomous, as I am reading it, is a conception of them as able to *bind* themselves normatively by their attitudes, to *make* themselves responsible (acquire an actual normative status) by *taking* themselves to be responsible (adopting a normative attitude). In the favored cases, adopting the attitude actualizes the virtual status that is the object of the attitude. The resulting status is not just attitude-dependent (no attitude → no status) but immediately instituted by the attitudes (attitude → status). That is what it is to understand the attitude as *constitutive*.

Further, being able to adopt such immediately constitutive self*-attributions is itself a normative status. For Kant thinks that rational knowers-and-agents have the *authority* to adopt immediately constitutive self*-attributions or acknowledgments. To be a discursive being is to have the authority to commit oneself, epistemically in judgment and practically in intention (“adopting a practical maxim”). Both of these are undertakings or acknowledgings of responsibility: committing oneself to how things are or how they shall be. This *authority* to

make oneself responsible just by taking oneself to be responsible might be called the basic Kantian normative status* (BKNS, for short). Being a normative subject, for him, is being an autonomous agent-and-knower: one that can be the subject of normative statuses such as responsibility and authority. Furthermore, one is in the end committed to (responsible for) only what one explicitly *acknowledges* as one's commitments (responsibilities)—and for commitment that turn out to be implicit in those acknowledgements as consequences or presuppositions of them. It is that authority to make oneself responsible that, according to Kant, other rational beings are obliged to recognize, as the fundamental dignity of rational knowers-and-agents.

The basic Kantian normative status is a complex, attitude-involving status. For it is the authority (the complex status) to adopt a certain kind of attitude: an immediately status-instituting attitude, what I am calling an “immediately constitutive” attitude. This sort of attitude is an attributing of a status (in the case of the BKNS, exclusively to oneself*) such that adoption of that attitude is sufficient all by itself for the status to be exhibited by the one to whom it is attributed (in the case of the BKNS, so long as that is also the one by whom it is attributed). In Hegel's terminology, it is a way consciousness can be *for* a consciousness that is sufficient to determine that that is the way consciousness is *in* itself. For one's consciousness to be *that way for one's own consciousness is to be that way in oneself.*

**Autonomy:
The Basic Kantian Normative Status**



The bulk of the *Self-Consciousness* chapter consists of an investigation of the conception of this kind of immediately status-constituting attitude. For the idea of individual attitudes of attributing statuses that suffice, all by themselves, just in virtue of the kind of attitudes they are, to institute the statuses they attribute, is the idea of Mastery, or pure independence. (What it is purified of is all hint of dependence, that is, responsibility correlative with that authority.) And that is the topic of all the allegories of kinds of self-consciousness recounted in *Self-Consciousness*.

The concept of immediately status-constitutive attitudes is an extreme version of what Hegel thinks of as the basic idea of modernity. On this rendering of the transition from traditional to modern, traditional forms of life revolved around an appreciation of the status-

dependence of normative attitudes, what we can now recharacterize as the *authority* of norms over attitudes, of how what obligations and authorities there are determine what responsibilities and authority normative subjects should acknowledge and attribute. By contrast, modern forms of life are characterized by an appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses, what we can now recharacterize as the *authority* of attitudes over norms, the way in which what obligations and authorities there are, and what they are, answers to the attributions and acknowledgments of normative subjects. The idea that some attitudes can *immediately institute* the normative statuses that are their objects, that in their case, *taking* someone to be authoritative or responsible can by itself *make* them have that authority or responsibility, is, on Hegel's view a characteristic deformation of the modern insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. It is the idea allegorized as Mastery. Hegel sees modernity as shot through with this conception of the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses, and it is precisely this aspect of modernity that he thinks eventually needs to be overcome. In the end, he thinks even Kant's symmetric, reflexive, self*-directed version of the idea in the form of the autonomy model of normativity is a form of Mastery. In Hegel's rationally reconstructed recollection of the tradition, which identifies and highlights an expressively progressive trajectory through it, Kant's is the final, most enlightened modern form, the one that shows the way forward—but it is nonetheless a form of the structural *misunderstanding* of normativity in terms of Mastery.

The claim that normative attitudes *institute* normative statuses goes beyond the mere claim of attitude-*dependence* of normative statuses. But beyond these two is the claim that at

least some normative attitudes are *immediately constitutive* of normative statuses. This sort of *taking* someone to be committed is sufficient for *making* that one *be* committed. Self-consciousness that understands itself in terms of the categories of Mastery construes normativity in terms of *immediately* status-constitutive attitudes. Hegel clearly thinks that such a conception takes the insight of modernity concerning the attitude-dependence of normative statuses too far. The form of his objection to all forms of self-conceptions that have the characteristic shape of Mastery is the same. We can think of Hegel's diagnosis of the metaphysical error that manifests itself as forms of self-consciousness understanding itself in the way characteristic of Mastery as having three levels, proceeding from the more to the less abstract.

First, it is characteristic of self-consciousness with the structure of Mastery to understand itself as being, in itself, "pure independence." That is, it conceives itself as exercising authority unmixed and unmediated by any correlative responsibility, which is normative "dependence." This, Hegel claims, is an ultimately incoherent conception. It is something the Master can be at most *for* himself, not *in* himself. As so conceived, the Master would be unable to *commit* himself, for a determinately contentful commitment involves being responsible to the *content* to which one has committed oneself, in the sense that one makes oneself liable to assessment of one's success in fulfilling that commitment (a judgment's being true or an intention successful) to the normative standard set by the content of one's status. The Master cannot acknowledge that moment of dependence-as-responsibility.

Second, as "pure independence," the Master cannot acknowledge the responsibility of his attitudes to normative statuses: the status-dependence of normative attitudes that was, Hegel

thinks, a genuine insight of traditional forms of normativity (Geist), albeit one that was expressed in deformed, because one-sided, practical conceptions of normativity in terms of the model of subordination and obedience. The question of whether the normative status the Master acknowledges or claims—what he is *for himself**—is what he *really* is, *in himself*, cannot arise within the conception of Mastery. For to acknowledge facts about what someone is *really* committed or entitled to, what responsibility or authority they *really* have, what they are *in themselves*, is to acknowledge something that serves as normative standards for the evaluation of the correctness of normative attitudes of attributing, acknowledging, or claiming those statuses. By contrast, the Master must understand his attitudes as answering to (responsible to, dependent on) *nothing*.

Finally, the Master has a conception of normative *force*, in Frege's sense of the pragmatic significance of statuses and attitudes—what one is *doing* in becoming authoritative or responsible, and in attributing and exercising authority or attributing and acknowledging responsibility—that leaves no room for the contrast and division of labor between such force and the determinate conceptual *content* of either normative states or attitudes. This, I will claim, is the form of complaint that binds together the treatment of all the forms of self-consciousness conceiving itself according to categories of Mastery. There is no intelligible semantics (account of content) that is compatible with the pragmatics (account of normative force, status, and attitude) to which they are committed. A key to this line of thought is that Hegel understands the relations between Fregean force and content, between statuses and attitudes, on the one hand, and content on the other, in normative terms of authority and responsibility (independence and dependence). Developing a lesson he learned from Kant, Hegel takes the notion of content itself

to be something that must be understood in terms of the way in which to understand statuses and attitudes as contentful is to understand them as responsible to, and so normatively dependent on, something determined by that content.

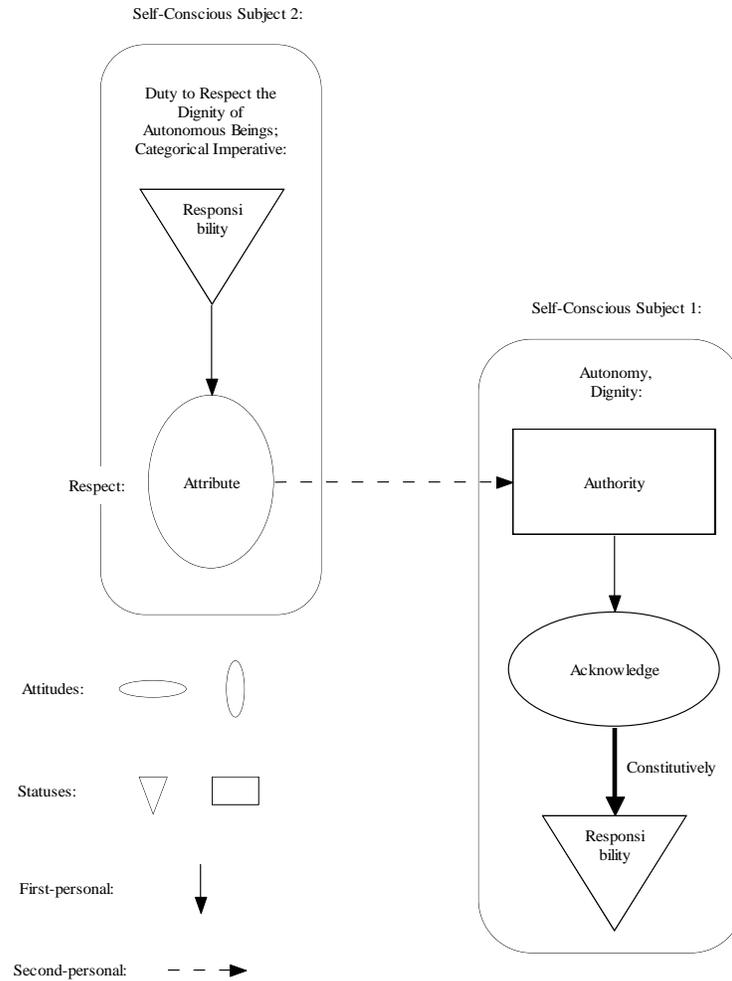
IV. A Model of General Recognition

Hegel thinks that there is something deeply defective about the idea of normative attitudes that are *immediately constitutive* of normative statuses, which lies at the core of the Kantian understanding of normativity in terms of individual autonomy. Though there is also something deeply right about the Kant-Rousseau development of the self-government tradition in the modern metaphysics of normativity, the insight it affords about normative statuses as not only attitude-dependent, but as instituted by attitudes must be reconciled with the insight that normative statuses are at base *social* statuses. Hegel's recognition model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes articulates the idea that other-regarding attitudes of attributing responsibility and authority (holding other normative subjects responsible, taking them to be authoritative) are equally essential to them really being responsible or authoritative (having the statuses of being committed or entitled) as are self-regarding attitudes of acknowledging those statuses.

The social dimension provided by normative attitudes of attribution is not simply absent from Kant's picture, however. It is true that having the authority to make oneself responsible (institute

that kind of normative status) by adopting a purely self-regarding attitude of acknowledging the responsibility (committing oneself) owes nothing to its attribution by others. It is a status that is constitutive of being an autonomous discursive being, a subject of normative attitudes and statuses. And that basic constitutive normative status is not itself instituted by normative attitudes. In this respect, Kant acknowledges not only the attitude-dependence of ground-level responsibilities, but also the dependence of the status-instituting capacity of those attitudes on the normative status that is the authority to institute responsibilities by acknowledging them: the authority to commit oneself. But that status as an autonomous normative subject, the subject of commitments just insofar as one is able (has the authority) to commit oneself, to bind oneself by norms that are binding just insofar as the one bound acknowledges them *as* binding, is a constitutive kind of *dignity*. As such, it unconditionally deserves the *respect* of other autonomous normative subjects. They have a *duty*—an obligation, a responsibility—to respect the dignity that consists in the authority to make oneself responsible by taking oneself to be responsible. So Kant's picture does have a social dimension, in which attribution as well as acknowledgment plays a role. We could diagram it like this:

The Social Dimension of the Kantian Autonomy Model



This is complex interpersonal constellation of basic normative attitudes and normative statuses, in which relations of statuses as objects of attitudes and attitudes as objects of statuses are piled on one another five levels deep. As rational beings we have a standing formal obligation or responsibility (status—level 5) to respect, in the sense of attributing (attitude—level 4) to each rational being *as* a rational being, the dignity, in the sense of having the *authority* (a status—

level 3) (which we *attribute* at level 4) constitutively to acknowledge (status-instituting attitude—level 2) responsibilities or commitments (status—level 1), both doxastic and practical.

All of these elements Hegel can applaud, and they are the basis for him to say that Kant was *almost* right. He had all the crucial conceptual elements, just not arranged properly. So Kant has the idea that it is a necessary condition of *being* responsible that one *acknowledges* that responsibility. (That is autonomy.) And he does leave room for a distinction between *explicitly* acknowledging the responsibility, and acknowledging it only *implicitly*—for instance, just by being a knower and agent, thinking, talking and acting intentionally. But one might think—I think Hegel does think—that this is not yet a full-blooded sense of *being responsible*. It might well be laid alongside of another important but not yet full-blooded sense of *being responsible* that consists in being *held* responsible—a matter of *attributing*, rather than *acknowledging*.² Hegel claims that genuine responsibility requires *both* of these attitudes, arranged as reciprocal recognition (dual attitudes of acknowledging and attributing) of the status. His view is what one gets by accepting this Kantian picture, but treating *both* attitudes, the attribution of authority as well as its exercise in acknowledging responsibility, as necessary, and jointly sufficient, for the institution of normative statuses.

Looking at the diagram of the complex constellation of basic attitudes and statuses that make up the Basic Kantian Normative Status makes clear that although the determinate

² This is the pure social-status “Queens Shilling” sense of “responsible”: doing something that (whether one knows it or not) has the social significance of entitling others to attribute a responsibility. In *MIE* I try to make go as far as it can all on its own. Such an enterprise can seem perverse, but it is adopted with with Popperian methodological malice aforethought. The idea is to explore the strongest, most easily falsifiable hypothesis, to see what explanatory work it can do, how far it will take one, before its explanatory resources are exhausted.

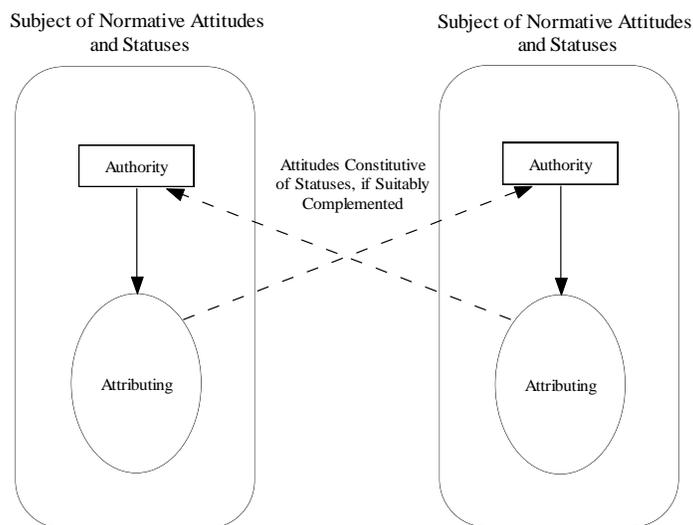
responsibilities at the bottom of the diagram (cognitive commitments to claims and practical commitments to doings) are instituted by immediately constitutive attitudes, the authority to do that, which is autonomy, is not conceived as itself instituted by attitudes. And looking at the diagram of the social extension of the BKNS likewise makes clear that the duty to respect the autonomy of others is also a status that it is not itself instituted by attitudes. Being autonomous and having the responsibility to respect autonomy by attributing the authority to commit oneself are both statuses that are not instituted by attitudes but are for Kant constitutive of the status of being a rational, discursive being. That is why for him a special story needs to be told about how they are two sides of one coin, two necessarily intertwined aspects of one conception of such beings.

Suppose one accepted the motivations that lead Kant to the conception of the complex of basic attitudes and statuses that is the socially extended BKNS, but thought both that *all* normative statuses are instituted by normative attitudes, and that such institution requires not only the attitude of the subject of the status but also the attitude of some other who attributes it. This latter is the idea that the attitudes of any one individual normative subject can institute normative statuses only when they are *suitably complemented* by the attitudes of others. According to this line of thought, the respect others owe to autonomous normative subjects is not something *added to* the authority those subjects have, as autonomous, to institute responsibilities by acknowledging them (to make themselves responsible by taking themselves to be responsible). Recognition, the cognitive attitude of attributing the authority distinctive of autonomy, is an essential component required to institute that very authority. These are the thoughts that lead from the Kantian model of *individual* autonomous normative subjects as

immediately instituting their determinate responsibilities by their attitudes of acknowledging them to the Hegelian model of the *social* institution of normative statuses by attitudes of normative subjects that must be *mediated* by each other's suitably complementary attitudes.

What results from modifying the socially extended complex of basic attitudes and statuses that comprises both autonomy and the duty to respect it is a complex of attitudes and statuses that has a different, symmetrical, essentially social structure. At the crudest level, the structure is this:

Robust General Recognition
is Attributing the Authority
to Attribute Authority
(and Responsibility)



This is a very basic constellation of normative attitudes and statuses. I am understanding Hegel as taking *this* to be the underlying metaphysical structure of (genuine) normativity.

All that is shown here of the complex constellation of attitudes and statuses exhibited by the two normative subjects is what corresponds to the top two-thirds of the BKNS. It does not represent the specific responsibilities and other statuses that each is recognized as having the authority to acknowledge. What is represented is a structure of general recognition, not specific recognition. It represents recognition in the sense of recognizing as, taking to be, a general recognizer. This is attributing the authority to adopt attitudes that are constitutive of statuses, not immediately, but in the sense that they institute statuses *if suitably socially complemented*. In order to institute the authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes (here, attributions), one must oneself be taken to have (be recognized as having) that authority by another, whom one in turn recognizes as having that very same authority. The idea is that recognitive attitudes can institute recognitive authority just in case those attitudes are "suitably (socially) complemented" in the sense of being reciprocated. Recognitive authority—the authority that corresponds to autonomy in the BKNS, the authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes—is itself instituted by suitably complemented recognitive attitudes. It is only when those attitudes are suitably complemented that they have the *authority* to institute normative statuses. *Hegelian recognition* is what *Kantian respect* (for the authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes) becomes when that *attribution* of authority by another is understood as essential to the institution of the authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes.

As autonomous, Kantian normative subjects can, in a certain sense, lift themselves up by their own bootstraps. For they can actualize normative statuses that are merely virtual, that is, that exist only as the objects of their normative attitudes. But the authority to do that, that authority in which their autonomy consists, is not itself the product of their own attitudes, nor of

the attitudes of other normative subjects who are obliged to respect their autonomy by attributing that authority. Their possession of that authority is just a fact about them, as is everyone else's responsibility to respect it. By contrast, the cognitive authority of Hegelian normative subjects is instituted entirely by cognitive attitudes that correspond to Kantian respect for the autonomy of others. The cognitive status that is virtual as the mere object of cognitive attitudes (attributions of authority) is actualized, according to the cognitive model, when and only when the recognizing subject is recognized (as a recognizing subject) by another recognizing subject whom the first subject recognizes in turn. They do not individually lift themselves up into the normative status of having cognitive authority by the bootstraps of their own cognitive attitudes (attributions of authority), but the cognitive unit they form when their recognition is mutual *does* lift the attitudes of *both*; it does promote their statuses (cognitive authority) that are merely virtual as the objects of their attitudes up to the level of actual normative statuses. The cognitive statuses are not immediately instituted by cognitive attitudes, but they are instituted by suitably socially complemented cognitive attitudes.

V. Model of Specific Recognition

This, I claim, is the basic constellation of attitudes and statuses (we'll look further at its fine structure below) that Hegel invokes under the rubric of "the process of the pure Notion [Begriff] of recognition, of the duplicating of self-consciousness in its oneness."³ He introduces the topic by saying

³ *PhG* [M185].

Self-consciousness exists *in* and *for itself*, because and by virtue of its existing in and for itself for an other; which is to say, it exists only as recognized.⁴

What a normative subject is *in itself* is its normative statuses. What it is *for itself* is its normative attitudes. Being a subject of normative statuses and attitudes depends on being recognized as such by another normative subject. “A self-consciousness exists *for a self-consciousness*. Only so is it in fact self-consciousness.”⁵ This is the step that sees recognition, the successor attitude to Kantian respect as an essential constitutive element of the status of normative self-consciousness that is the successor status to Kantian autonomy.

Furthermore, instituting a self in the sense of something with the status of a normative subject requires cognitive attitudes that are *symmetric, reciprocal, or mutual*.

Each is for the other the middle term, through which each mediates itself with itself and unites with itself; and each is for itself, and for the other, an immediate being on its own account, which at the same time is such only through this mediation. **They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another.**⁶

Here we see the move from Kantian *immediate* institution of statuses by individual attitudes to the Hegelian cognitive institution of statuses by attitudes that are socially *mediated* by the attitudes of others.

Thus the movement is simply the double movement of the two self-consciousnesses. Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the

⁴ *PhG* [P178]. [The “P” indicates this is Pinkard’s translation, rather than Miller’s.]

⁵ *PhG* [M177].

⁶ *PhG* [M184]. Emphasis added.

other does the same. Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both.⁷

It is this symmetric cognitive constellation of basic normative attitudes and statuses that he refers to in the very next sentence as “the pure Notion of recognition, of the duplicating of self-consciousness in its oneness.” It is the basic structure of robust general recognition, in which suitably socially complemented cognitive attitudes institute statuses of cognitive authority, their normative subjects, and the dyadic community that consists of normative subjects who actually reciprocally recognize and are recognized by each other. “The elaboration of the concept of this spiritual unity within its doubling presents us with the movement of *recognition*.”⁸

Recognizing another is taking or treating that other in practice as a normative self: as the subject of normative attitudes and statuses. More specifically, in the model, it is the attitude of attributing the status of authority to institute statuses by one’s attitudes, when those attitudes are suitably complemented. This is a version of the sort of authority that is Kantian autonomy, differing in the understanding of the constellation of attitudes that can institute (actualize otherwise virtual) statuses as socially mediated rather than individually immediate. Adopting cognitive attitudes in this sense is applying to the one recognized an articulated normative concept of a self. It is consciousness of a self *as* a self. The recognizing consciousness also has that concept applied to it; it is a recognizing self *for* a recognizing self. But the self it is a self for, the one that is conscious of it as a self is not itself, but the recognized-recognizing other self. The self-consciousness that is instituted and actualized for the recognizing-and-recognized

⁷ *PhG* [M182].

⁸ *PhG* [P178].

individuals making up the recognitive dyad is a property they have *as* a recognitive dyad. It is only secondarily and as a result that it is a property of each individual. Hegel refers to the recognitive community of recognizing-and-recognized individual normative subjects as “Spirit” [Geist]:

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'.⁹

“Independence” is in the model *authority*: the authority of the several recognitive subjects. It is not *immediate* authority (independence), but authority that is socially *mediated* by the attitudes of others, who attribute it in recognizing the independent normative subject *as* authoritative.

“Freedom” is Hegel’s term for the symmetric recognitive constellation that integrates immediacy as the actuality of attitudes with their social mediation (through the requirement of suitable complementation of attitudes for their institutional authority).

The diagram above represents only the most general outlines of the complex constellation of basic normative attitudes and statuses that is the model of Hegelian recognition being proposed as a successor to the model of Kantian autonomy. For it characterizes only the structure of robust *general* recognition, the recognitive attitudes that institute the recognitive status of having, which requires being recognized as having, recognitive authority. What is left out of that diagram are the *specific* (nonrecognitive) statuses of responsibility and authority (paradigmatically for claimings or judgments, and intentional doings) that Kant took autonomous normative subjects to have the authority to institute by their attitudes of acknowledgment.

⁹ *PhG* [M177].

Focusing on conditions on possession of *specific* normative statuses, we can start with the one Kantian autonomy emphasizes: responsibility. Hegel does not want to relinquish Kant's insight that one is responsible only for what one acknowledges responsibility for. He wants to supplement it with the thought that it is nugatory to acknowledge a commitment unless one has licensed someone to *hold* you responsible. (Ultimately, this will be a matter of conditions of the determinate contentfulness of the commitment. Unless *administered*, the commitment is not determinately contentful.) The recognition model requires suitable social complementation of attitudes for statuses that are the objects of those attitudes to be actualized.

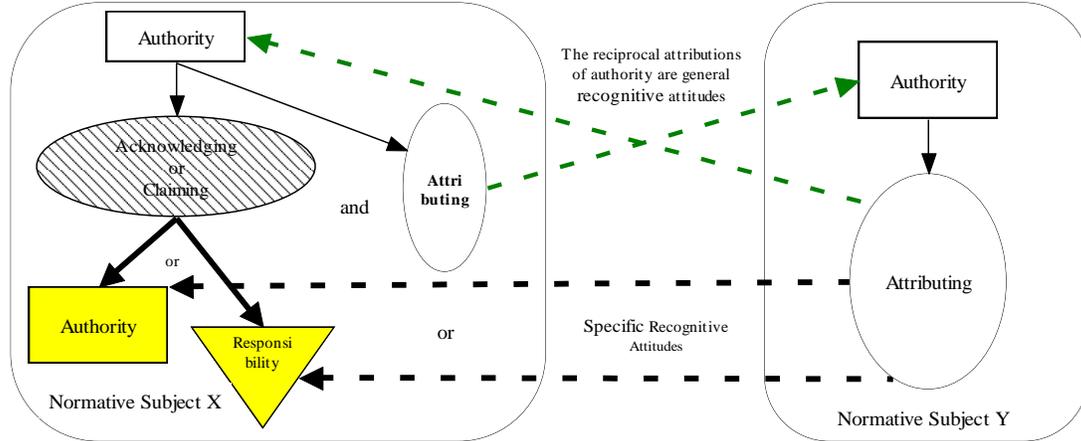
It follows that as with the Kantian autonomy structure, attributing a responsibility has to be complemented by the acknowledgment of the subject of the responsibility. One only *is* responsible (a status) for what one *acknowledges* responsibility for (an attitude). The status of responsibility, which is virtual in the sense of just being the object of these paired attitudes of attribution and acknowledgment, only becomes actualized—a status outside the attitudes it is an object of—when the status attributed is also acknowledged. This is just the other side of the coin of the requirement that for acknowledging a commitment or responsibility to succeed in instituting that status (for it to be constitutive of the commitment it acknowledges, for it to be a successful undertaking of that commitment, a status) someone else must both be authorized to *hold* the subject responsible (attribute the commitment, an attitude) and must *actually* do so. Kant does *not* require this social complementation of attitudes, but thinks that autonomous individual subjects just come with the authority to actualize the statuses that are the objects of their attitudes—immediately, in the sense of not depending on any other actual attitudes. And according to the social cognitive model, the same paired conditions requiring social

complementation of normative attitudes to institute normative statuses holds for attributions and acknowledgments (claims) of authority. One only *has* authority (including the authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes) if others *take* one to have that authority by attributing it. A claim of authority only actually institutes the authority claimed if others whom the authoritative subject recognizes as having the authority to do so recognize that authority by attributing it. Absent others treating one *as* authoritative, one's own claim to authority is incomplete. The authority in question is merely virtual, as the object of the subject's claiming attitude. It is a presupposition of the actualization of determinate statuses that the one who holds the first subject responsible is authorized to do so, and that that recognizing subject takes it that the first one is authorized to acknowledge the commitment. Acknowledging a status such as responsibility is suitably complemented only if some recognized recognizer also attributes it—holds one responsible. And attributing a status such as responsibility is suitably complemented only if it is also acknowledged by the recognized recognizer to whom it is attributed.

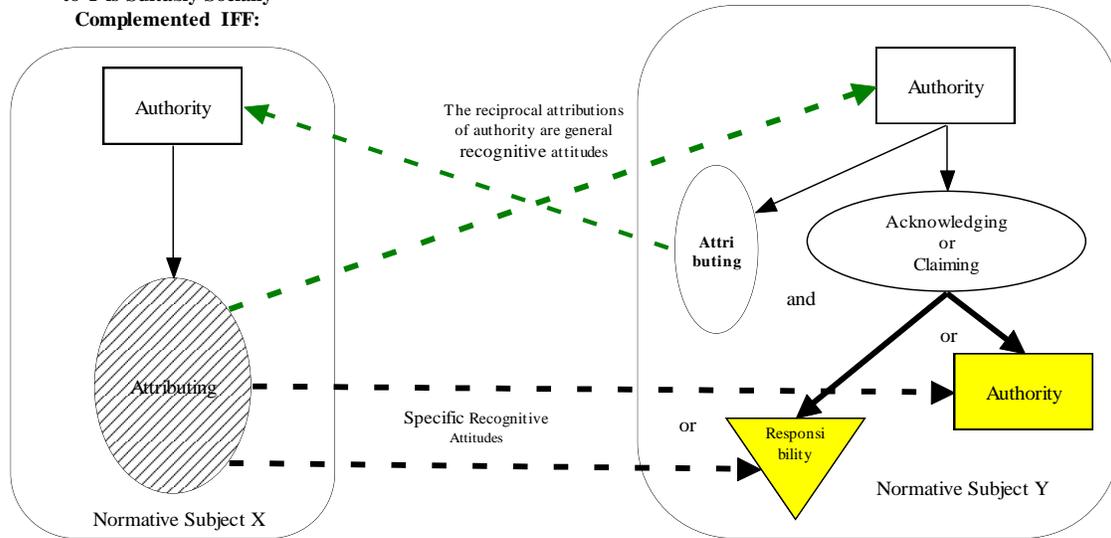
So the full constellation of basic attitudes and statuses that is the Hegelian cognitive model developed on the basis of the Kantian autonomy model (as socially extended to include the duty to respect autonomy) is more complex. It can be diagrammed like this:

Hegel's Recognitive Model: Suitably Complemented Normative Attitudes Institute Normative Statuses

**An Attitude of X Acknowledging a Status
is Suitably Socially Complemented
IFF there is a Y s.t.:**



**An Attitude of X Attributing a Status
to Y is Suitably Socially
Complemented IFF:**



The attitude that is socially complemented is cross-hatched.

Resultant specific, determinate (nonrecognitive) statuses are in color.

This is the fine structure of the Hegelian reciprocal recognition model of the social institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes.

The top half of this diagram shows the recognitive dyad in which the attitude of acknowledgment of specific normative statuses by normative subject X (shown as shaded) is suitably complemented by Y's attitudes of attribution so as actually to institute those specific statuses. The bottom half shows the recognitive dyad in which the attitude of attributing of specific normative statuses by normative subject X to normative subject Y (shown as shaded) are suitably complemented by Y's attitudes of acknowledgment so as actually to institute those specific statuses. Within each dyad, the reciprocal general recognitive attitudes of attributing authority are included at the top. They differ from those in the previous, simplified, diagram of reciprocal general recognition only in that the authority that is reciprocally attributed is now articulated into authority not only to adopt attitudes of attribution of normative statuses (including specific ones), but also attitudes of acknowledgment—in each case, constitutively if suitably complemented. The specific normative statuses instituted by the suitably complemented attitudes are on the lower left of the top dyad and on the lower right of the bottom one. What one sees there is essentially the diagram of the basic Kantian normative status of autonomy. Each subject has the authority to institute normative statuses (including specific ones) by acknowledging them. The big differences are:

- *All* the normative statuses are instituted by appropriate constellations of normative attitudes—constellations in which they are suitably socially complemented.
- The attribution by others of the authority to adopt constitutive (status-instituting) attitudes, which corresponds to Kantian respect, is an essential element, a *necessary* condition, of the institution of that authority.
- The whole structure of statuses and attitudes, including other-regarding ones, in which the substructure taking the place of the Kantian autonomy structure of statuses and

attitudes is embedded, is being taken to be the context *sufficient* for the institution of statuses by attitudes.

The core idea of the recognitive model concerns what is required for statuses of responsibility and authority that are virtual in the sense of being the objects of attitudes of attribution and acknowledgment to be actualized. It is the idea that it is necessary and sufficient for the attitudes in question to be part of an appropriate constellation of other attitudes. A constellation of attitudes appropriate for realizing their objects is one in which the attitudes of attributing or acknowledging responsibility and authority are suitably complemented by other attitudes. When the statuses that are attributed to another subject are also acknowledged by that subject, and when the statuses that are acknowledged by one subject are attributed to that subject, and when the normative subjects of these symmetric attitudes generally recognize each other, then genuine normative statuses are instituted. To recognize someone in the general sense is to attribute the *authority* to adopt attitudes that will, if suitably complemented, institute statuses, that is *actualize* the statuses that are the objects of those attitudes.

VI. The Status-Dependence of Attitudes

At the center of this lecture has been an account of Hegel's successor-conception to Kant's autonomy version of the *attitude-dependence* of some crucial normative statuses, specifically determinately contentful responsibilities, both doxastic and practical (for Kant endorsements in the form of judgments and practical maxims).

Kant combines his development of the characteristic modern idea of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses with an acknowledgment of the traditional idea of the status-dependence of normative attitudes. For Kant, the authority that is autonomy, and the responsibility that is the duty to respect (the precursor of recognition) are statuses that are *not* instituted by attitudes. They are postulated as actual authority and responsibility, that are not promoted from the virtual status of being objects of attitudes that institute them. Hegel's critique of modernity takes the form of a diagnosis of it as opposing a one-sided hypersubjectivity to the one-sided hyper-objectivity of traditional conceptions of normativity. That normative statuses are attitude-dependent is a genuine insight. But it will be understood only one-sidedly if it is not balanced by an appreciation of what was right about the traditional appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the responsibility attitudes owe to statuses, the dimension of authority that statuses exert over attitudes. Kant has one way of combining these insights. Hegel proposes another.

The bulk of the discussion in this lecture has been on the side of *pragmatics*: the study of the normative attitudes and statuses that are the bearers of determinate content. To understand the dimension of status-dependence of attitudes, we must look also to the side of *semantics*. For the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*, between appearance and reality, between what things are *for consciousness* and what they are *in themselves*, shows up *both* in the form of the pragmatic distinction between attitudes and statuses *and* in the form of the distinction between senses and referents, as that semantic distinction is rendered in Hegel's terms. In pragmatic terms, it takes the form of the distinction between what consciousness is *for* (a) *consciousness* (itself or another) and what (a) consciousness is *in itself*. This is the distinction between what a

normative subject is *really* committed or entitled to, its actual responsibilities and authority, and what responsibilities or authority other subjects attribute to it, or it acknowledges itself. That is just the distinction between statuses and attitudes. Semantically, though, appearances, what things are for consciousness, are the Hegelian analog of Fregean senses. What those senses refer to or represent, how things are in themselves, is the reality that is the Hegelian analog of Fregean referents. Hegel accepts Kant's insight that what a representing (here, a sense, an appearance, what things are *for* consciousness) represents is what exercises a distinctive kind of *authority* over the correctness of the representing. That is what the representing is *responsible* to for its correctness, what provides the normative standard for assessments of its correctness. This is the semantic correlate of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the sense in which what consciousness is *for* consciousness, a subject's normative attitudes, is *responsible to* (dependent upon) what consciousness is *in* itself (what it is *really* committed to or authoritative about), which accordingly exercises *authority over* those attitudes.

The relation between phenomena as representings (Hegelian senses) and noumena as representeds (Hegelian referents) is established by the process of *recollection* (*Erinnerung*). That is a retrospective rational reconstruction of an expressively progressive process of experience as explicitation: the gradual emergence *for* consciousness of how things are *in* themselves. There is a deep connection between this account of the process by which content is *determined*—viewed prospectively, becoming more determinate, viewed retrospectively, explicitly revealing new aspects of the always-already determinate content that has been implicit—and the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses according to the recognitive model of the institution of statuses by attitudes. To begin with, the context of those content-determining

processes on the side of semantics is provided by the cognitive processes that institute normative statuses on the side of pragmatics. As we saw in the discussion of the *Consciousness* chapters, and will consider further in the discussion of *Reason*, content-determination is the incorporation of immediacy in the mediated form of conceptual content. Specifically, that immediacy takes the form of normative *attitudes* that subjects *actually* adopt in the course of experience, in response to collisions among attitudes they find themselves with, both through perception and through inference. Those collisions of attitudes are the experience of error. Acknowledging some commitments normatively requires sacrificing others incompatible with them. That phase of the experience of error in turn requires retrospective revisions of one's understanding of the conceptual *contents* of one's commitments: of what is *really* incompatible with what and what *really* follows from what. This final retrospective, rationally reconstructive phase of each cycle of the experience of error enforces *to consciousness* the distinction between noumena and phenomena, between how things really are and how things merely seem or appear. The form that distinction takes on the side of the subject *is* the distinction between normative *statuses*, what one has *really* committed oneself to in claiming, for instance, that the coin is copper, and normative *attitudes*, what one *takes* oneself to be committed to in making such a claim. This pragmatic distinction reflects the distinction between the conceptual contents that are Hegelian referents and those that are Hegelian senses: the appearances of those referents, what they are *for* consciousness.

Thought of from the point of view of the subject, the process of content-determination, by which noumena (referents, representeds) become something *to consciousness* distinct from the phenomena (senses, representings) that the experience of error unmasks as what things are *for*

consciousness, is the emergence of the distinction between what *is* right (with respect to the relations of material incompatibility-and-consequence that articulate conceptual contents) and what *seems* right to the subject whose contentful commitments are at issue. This is just the distinction between normative *statuses* and normative *attitudes*. As Wittgenstein puts the point: “One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can’t talk about ‘right’.”¹⁰ Pragmatically, the question of how to understand noumena in terms of phenomena, which we have been addressing semantically, shows up precisely as the question of how it is that *attitudes* (how things seem to the subject) can institute genuine *statuses*, which are binding on and beyond the attitudes of the subject. How can mere attitudes be transcended? (Compare: How can referents become something *to* consciousness beyond mere senses, what things are *for* consciousness?) Here we have seen that the key insight motivating the recognitive model is that we can make sense of the distinction between status and attitude only if in *acknowledging a responsibility* (committing oneself) one is at the same time *authorizing others to hold one responsible*, by *attributing* that responsibility (commitment). They then can be understood as *administering a content* one has committed oneself to—a content that is *not* determined just by the attitudes of the acknowledger. To see *acknowledging a responsibility* and *attributing authority* (to hold one responsible) as two sides of one coin *both* articulates the distinction between mere attitudes and genuine statuses, *and* brings into play the notion of determinate content as what one makes oneself responsible *for*. This is what the requirement that attitudes be *suitably complemented* in order to institute genuine statuses does. It makes available determinate contents, and thereby articulates the dimension along which

¹⁰ *PI* §258.

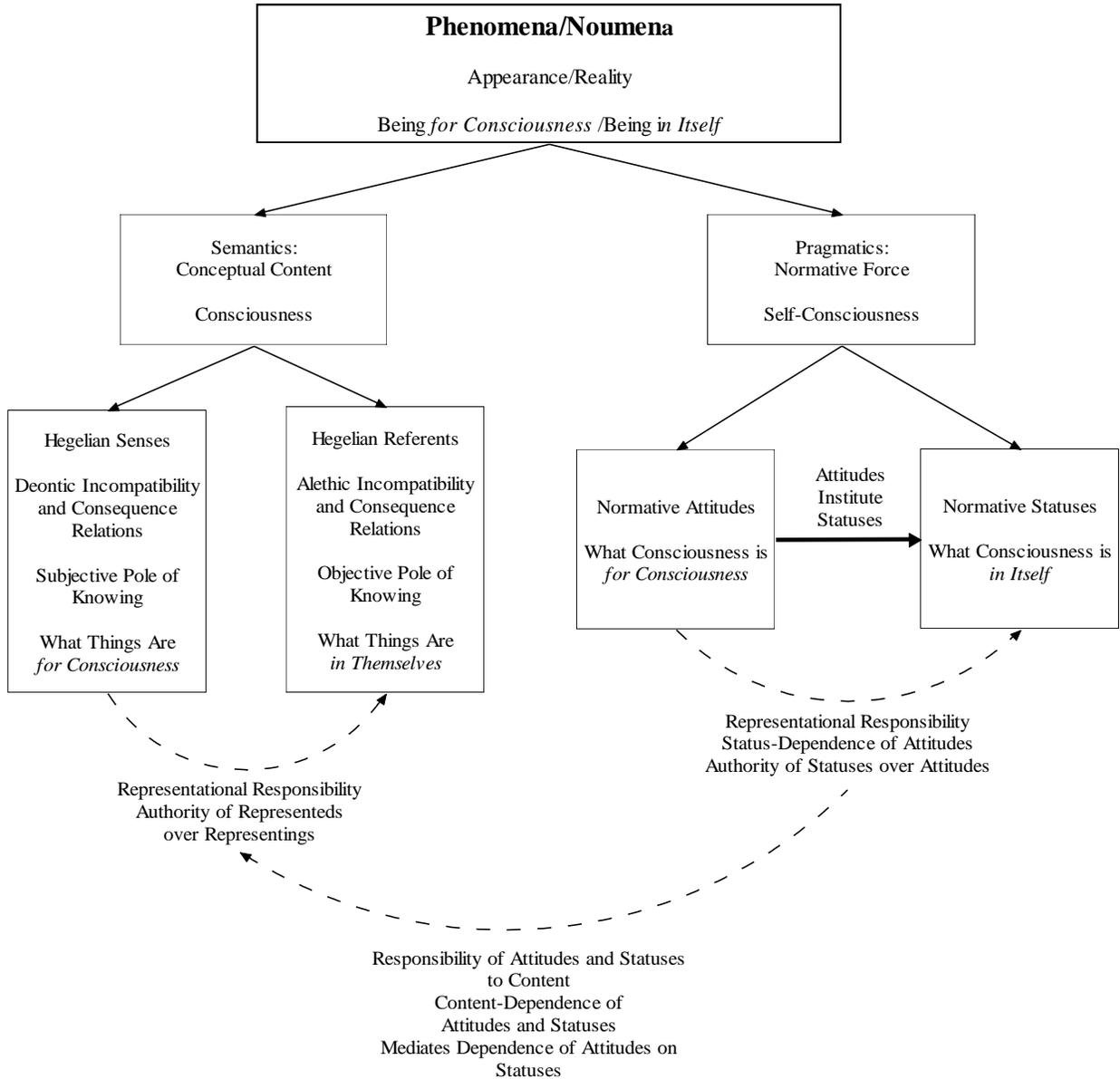
attitudes are dependent upon statuses, in the sense of being responsible to them for assessments of their correctness: senses as answering for their correctness to referents. The status-dependence of attitudes shows up in the cognitive model as a sense in which *pragmatics* (the theory of normative *force*) is constrained by *semantics* (the theory of conceptual *content*).

Statuses are normative *noumena* (what consciousness is *in* itself), and attitudes are normative *phenomena* (what consciousness is *for* itself or for others). The story about noumena/phenomena in terms of recollection is accordingly the form of the story about the status-dependence of attitudes. Kant, having top-level *general* statuses, had this aspect of status-dependence of attitudes as well as attitude-dependence of statuses, since both autonomy and the duty of respect (the precursor of recognition) are statuses, but what autonomy is the authority to *do* is to institute statuses by attitudes, which is a form of the attitude-dependence of the resulting *specific* statuses. So Kant divided the labor: status-dependence of *general* attitudes (including the precursor of recognition—autonomy being the precursor of “suitably complementation”, as a notion of *constitutiveness* of attitudes) and attitude-dependence of *specific* statuses.

The statuses and their contents are determined by what is represented. The attitudes are can be thought of as senses, which inherit this crucial dimension of content from their referents. The *content* determines what one is *really* responsible *for*: the status to which the attitudes answer for their correctness, even though they instituted the status. That responsibility is administered by those one has made oneself responsible *to* in endorsing or acknowledging a responsibility, those to whom one has thereby ceded the *authority* to determine what one is *really* responsible for. If there is no responsibility *to* others, then in exercising one’s authority to commit oneself, one has

not succeeded in making oneself responsible *for* any determinate content. *That* is the cost of not having responsibility to others, authority of others, correlative with one's own authority (to undertake responsibility).

In claiming that the coin is copper, the commitment I undertake, the responsibility I acknowledge, is not determined just by my attitudes. I have made myself responsible to the actual content of the concept copper I have applied. I have authorized others to hold me responsible, not just according to my conception of copper (what I take to follow from or be incompatible with such a commitment, a matter of my attitudes), but according to the real content of the counter I have played in the public language-game. That is what determines what I have really committed myself to, the status I have actually acquired by my performance. The essentially *social* relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses—*both* the institution of statuses by attitudes *and* the dependence of attitudes on statuses (their responsibility to statuses for their correctness)—on the pragmatic side of force, and the essentially *historical* relations between what the contents are for consciousness (phenomena, senses, representing) and what they are in themselves (noumena, referents, represented) on the semantic side of conceptual content are two sides of one coin, recognitive and experiential aspects of one sort of developmental process. A rough diagram of the story so far is this:



The retrospective, rational-reconstructive *historical* phase of the process of experience, Hegel’s “Erinnerung”, explains how, on the semantic side, objective conceptual contents (referents, noumena) articulated as laws, facts, and objects with properties both are to be understood in terms of and serve as standards for assessments of the correctness of the process of manipulating subjective conceptual contents (senses) by applying rules, propositions, and singular terms and

predicates in adopting doxastic (and, as we'll see further along, practical) attitudes. The *social* character of the cognitive process that institutes both normative subjects and their communities explains, on the pragmatic side, both how normative statuses (noumena, what self-conscious subjects are in themselves) are instituted by (and in that strong sense dependent upon) normative attitudes (phenomena, what self-conscious subjects are for themselves) and how those statuses have authority over those attitudes in serving as standards for assessment of their correctness. This is the dimension of status-dependence of normative attitudes, the responsibility of those attitudes to (Hegel's "dependence on") statuses that balances the attitude-dependence of normative statuses.

VII. Conclusion

The cognitive model is Hegel's way of synthesizing two crucial insights. First is what he sees as the founding insight of modernity, the idea that normative statuses are attitude-dependent, as boiled down and purified in the Kant-Rousseau idea of autonomy into the idea that at least some normative statuses are *instituted by* normative attitudes. The second is what was right about the traditional idea (one-sidedly overemphasized by premodern thought) of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the idea that our attributions and acknowledgments (or claimings) of responsibility and authority answer for their correctness to facts about what people really are committed and entitled to. The complex social-historical cognitive model of normativity is Hegel's way of performing the *Eiertanz* required to make simultaneous sense both of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes and of the role of normative statuses as standards for assessments of the correctness of normative attitudes. At its base is the

idea that to undertake a responsibility must always also be to acknowledge the authority of others to hold one responsible—implicitly to attribute that authority. And explicitly to attribute determinately contentful authority to someone is also always to attribute implicit responsibilities defined by that content, administered on its behalf by others to whom one has made oneself responsible by the original assertion of the authority to make oneself responsible. In the case of the attribution of authority that is general recognition, this includes acknowledging one's own responsibility to respect exercises of that authority. In Hegel's terms, there is no independence without a correlative dependence, and *vice versa*. And consciousness is essentially self-consciousness, in the sense that one cannot make sense of what consciousness is in itself apart from concern with what it is for itself. Further, it is of the essence of the recognitive model of self-conscious normative subjects that "what consciousness is for itself" is always a matter of the constellation of attitudes comprising what *a* self-consciousness, an individual normative subject, is both *for itself* and *for others* in the recognitive community that is necessarily simultaneously synthesized by reciprocal recognitive attitudes along with individual self-consciousnesses.

Recollection and Recognition:
Semantic and Practical Dimensions of Hegel's *Phenomenology*

2019 Brentano Lectures, University of Vienna

Lecture 2:

Representation, Expression, and Recollection¹¹

I. Articulating Idealism

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

The next move is to think of the relation between conceptual content, so understood, and the forms such contents can take. The result is a *hylomorphic* conception of the conceptual. Conceptual contents, understood as roles with respect to relations of material incompatibility and consequence, are amphibious: they show up in two different forms. They have a *subjective* form and an *objective* form. The subjective form articulates what things are or can be *for consciousness*, and the objective form articulates what things are or can be *in themselves*. The

¹¹ This lecture is adapted from *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*, forthcoming from Harvard University Press, 2019.

second is the form of empirical *reality*; the first is the form in which that empirical reality *appears* to knowing subjects. They are related as the two poles of the intentional nexus: what can be *known* and the attempted *knowing* of it, noumena and phenomena. Genuine knowledge requires that one and the *same* content shows up in *both* different forms: the subjective form of thought and the objective form of fact. Conceptual contents of the two forms stand in a broadly representational relation to one another, as subjective *representings* of reality and the objective realities *represented*. Hegel's second semantic idea is this consequence of the hylomorphic development of the first: the two forms of conceptual content stand to one another in *representational* relations. These two dimensions of semantic contentfulness, the intelligible and the representational, can be thought of as Hegelian versions of the Fregean metaconcepts of sense and reference (*Sinn* and *Bedeutung*): thoughts and what thoughts are about, what can be expressed and what can be represented.

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

Another idea that is of the first importance for this enterprise is that conceptual content in the most basic sense is an essentially *modal* notion. The relations that in the first instance articulate

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

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

On the objective side of reality, the properties of being a mammal and being a reptile are incompatible in the sense that it is *impossible* for them to be conjoined in one object at the same time. The property of being a mammal has being a vertebrate as a consequence in the sense that it is *necessary* that any creature that is a mammal is a vertebrate. On the subjective side of thought, it is not impossible to take one and the same creature to be both a mammal and a reptile. Those thoughts are incompatible rather in the sense that one *ought not* conjoin them. If one takes a creature to be a mammal, it is possible that one does not take it also to be a vertebrate. But one

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

The resulting view is a kind of *conceptual realism*. For it takes the reality thought about, no less than thoughts about it, already to be in conceptual shape. It does that by starting with a conception of the conceptual that is not restricted to thoughts as thinkings, as psychological events or processes. It ties the conceptual to thought only in the Fregean sense of thinkables. (Frege says “A fact is a thought that is true.”¹²) On this conception, to be conceptually contentful is to stand in relations of incompatibility and consequence: to exclude and include other conceptually contentful items. The relations of incompatibility and consequence that articulate conceptual contents (and so count as “material” relations) are modally robust ones. So

¹² “The Thought: A Logical Inquiry” *Mind* Vol. 65, No. 259 (July, 1956), pp. 289-311.

Hegel's is a modal conceptual realism. His particular version is hylomorphic. Conceptual contents can take two forms: subjective and objective. Those two forms correspond to two different kinds of modality, alethic and deontic, nomological and normative. What accordingly becomes visible as *bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism* makes intelligible the possibility of genuine knowledge, by understanding conceptual content as actualizable in two forms: an objective form articulated by alethic nomological relations of necessary consequence and noncompossibility and a subjective form articulated by deontic normative relations of obligatory consequence and prohibited conjunction.

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

At the grossest level of structure, the objective realm of being is articulated by nomological *relations*, and the subjective realm of thought is articulated by norm-governed *processes*, *activities* or *practices*. It can be asked how things stand with the intentional nexus between these realms. Should it be construed in *relational* or *practical-processual* terms? If these are not mutually exclusive (as Hegel in fact understands things), so that both semantic relations and

pragmatic discursive activities of knowing and acting are essential, does one have conceptual, that is, explanatory priority over the other? Hegel takes there to be an explanatory *asymmetry* in that the semantic *relations* between those discursive practices and the objective relations they know about and exploit practically are *instituted* by the discursive practices that both articulate the subjective realm of thought and establish its relations to the objective realm of being. This asymmetry claim privileging specifically recollective discursive practices over semantic relations in understanding the intentional nexus between subjectivity and objectivity is the thesis of *conceptual idealism*.

The view Hegel develops in the *Phenomenology* is being expressed here by means of two radical, distinctively Hegelian theses: bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism, and recollective conceptual idealism.

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

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

Conceptual realism asserts the identity of conceptual content between facts and thoughts of those facts. (Compare Wittgenstein: “When we say, and mean, that such-and-such is the case, we—and our meaning—do not stop anywhere short of the fact; but we mean: this—is—so.” [*PI* §95]) Conceptual idealism offers a *pragmatic* account of the practical process by which that semantic-intentional relation between what things are for consciousness and what they are in themselves is established. Pragmatics, as I am using the term, is the study of the *use* of concepts by subjects engaging in discursive practices. Conceptual idealism asserts a distinctive kind of explanatory priority (a kind of authority) of pragmatics over semantics. For this reason it is a

pragmatist semantic explanatory strategy, and its idealism is a *pragmatist idealism*. The *sui generis* rational practical activity given pride of explanatory place by this sort of pragmatism is *recollection*.

II. Recollection: How the Process of Experience

Determines Conceptual Contents and Semantic Relations

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

The origin of the distinction lies in Kant's revolutionary idea that besides the concepts that we deploy to describe and explain empirical goings-on, there are concepts whose distinctive expressive role is to make explicit crucial structural features of the framework that makes

description and explanation possible. (Among them are alethic modal and deontic normative concepts.) Kant thought there was a single set of such categories that could express the structure of discursive activity *überhaupt*. The recollective story Hegel tells in the *Phenomenology* is a rationally reconstructed history of the expressively progressive development of “shapes of (self-)consciousness,” which are articulated by different, more-or-less adequate categorial metaconcepts. It culminates, however, in a single set of expressively adequate philosophical concepts. The master-strategy animating this reading of Hegel (and of Kant) is *semantic descent*: the idea that the ultimate point of studying these metaconcepts is what their use can teach us about the semantic contentfulness of ground-level concepts, so the best way to understand the categorial metaconcepts is to use them to talk about the use and content of ordinary concepts. It is because it is aimed at extracting such lessons that what I am offering can be thought of as a *semantic* reading of the *Phenomenology*. It is a *pragmatist* semantic reading because the key to understanding the conceptual contentfulness common to the objective empirical world of lawfully related facts about objects and their properties and the normative subjective activity of thinking (undertaking commitments by inferring and claiming, referring and classifying) is found to lie in the discursive practice and process of experience. The lead role in his account of experience as instituting semantic relations is played by recollection.

The pragmatic metaconcept of the process of experience is first put in play in the *Introduction*, at the very beginning of the book, in the form of the experience of *error*. It is invoked to explain how the consciousness-constitutive distinction-and-relation between what things are *for* consciousness and what things are *in* themselves shows up *to* consciousness itself. Hegel assumes that, however vaguely understood it might be at the outset, it is a distinction-and-

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

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

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

Hegel traces its origin to the experience of *error*—to what happens when a subject inevitably eventually discovers that it is in some instance *wrong*, that things are not in fact as they seemed. It is in having to *give up* a view that becomes untenable that it becomes visible as a

view (a representing), normatively answerable for its correctness to how things actually are (what is represented). When an error is practically acknowledged, what was *to* the subject a reality is unmasked and revealed as merely a guise, an appearance, a way things were only *for* the subject. One took the stick to be bent. On pulling it all the way out of the water, one sees that it was really straight all along. One's prior view shows up as just a view, a way it looked. That change of view involves distinguishing how things merely look from how they really are.

Hegel finds the roots of this sort of experience in our biological nature as desiring beings. For a kind of desire, such as hunger, comes with a characteristic associated sort of practical activity: eating. And responding to something in the environment by engaging in that activity, eating it, is according it a distinctive sort of practical significance: food. The very same desire that motivates the associated activity and defines that practical significance then serves as a proto-normative standard of correctness. What a creature practically takes or treats *as* food, by eating it, can turn out *not really to be* food, if eating it does not satisfy the hunger that motivated it. Eating something that turns out to be disgusting, or just unsatisfying, is the most primitive form of the experience of error. In it one learns that what one took to be food, what appeared to one as food (what one orrectically represented as food), was not in fact food. When a creature goes through that process of error and discovery, the distinction between what things are *for* it (the practical significance it practically assigned to them) and what things are *in themselves* (the practical significance they actually have, as assessed by the satisfaction of desire) becomes something *to* that creature. It is how a distinction between appearance and reality shows up practically already for preconceptual, merely desiring organisms. This sort of experience is the basis and practical form of *learning*. It is because it is also for Hegel the practical basis for the

semantic distinction between representings and representeds, sense and referent, that his deserves to be called a “pragmatist semantics

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

Synthesizing a constellation of commitments (both doxastic and practical) exhibiting the rational unity distinctive of apperception is practically acknowledging a variety of task-responsibilities. The one that matters most for Hegel’s later construal of the experience of error is the *critical* task-responsibility to extrude incompatible commitments. When one finds oneself

with commitments that are incompatible, by one's own lights, that is, according to the contents one thereby counts as attributing to them, one must practically acknowledge the responsibility to *do* something: to change or relinquish at least one of them. There is also a rational *ampliative* task-responsibility to acknowledge commitment to the *consequences* of one's commitments: to draw conclusions that rationally follow from them. Further, there is a *justificatory* responsibility, to be able to give *reasons* justifying the commitments one incorporates in the evolving constellation. Being apperceptively aware or conscious of something is *discursive* awareness of it, bringing it under a *concept*. The concept is for Kant accordingly a rule that determines what is incompatible with what (giving specific content to one's critical rational task-responsibility) and what is a consequence of what (giving specific content to one's ampliative and justificatory task-responsibilities). Conceptual contentfulness is suitability to play a functional role in the process of synthesizing a constellation of commitments exhibiting the rational unity characteristic of apperception. So conceptual content is a matter of standing in relations of material incompatibility and consequence to other such conceptually contentful items. This is a broadly pragmatist account, because the notion of conceptual content, which is the subject of *semantics*, is understood functionally in terms of the norm-governed practical synthetic *activity* by which one's commitments evolve and develop, which is the subject of *pragmatics*.

Hegel builds on Kant's model and develops it in his account of the experience of error. In doing so, he naturalizes Kant's account, in a broad sense, bringing it down to earth by grounding it in the preconceptual experience of desiring animals. But he also radicalizes and generalizes both the methodological pragmatism that consists in reading off an account of conceptual contentfulness from an account of rational activity and the specific focus on

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

Hegel's idea is that vindication of a proposed reparative strategy in response to acknowledgment of incompatible commitments must take the form of a special kind of *historical* narrative: a recollection. One must tell a retrospective story that rationally reconstructs an idealized expressively progressive trajectory through previous changes of view that culminates in the view being endorsed after the repair of the most recently discovered anomaly. In the first stage of the experience of error, the previous conception of how things are, what played the role *to* consciousness of what things are *in* themselves, has been unmasked as appearance, and has

accordingly shifted status. It now plays the role *to* consciousness of being only what things were *for* consciousness: an erroneous view of how things really are. To justify endorsing a new view as veridically representing how things really are in themselves, one must show how, assuming that things are that way, one did or could have come to *know* that things are that way.

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

Offering such a retrospective historical rational reconstruction of the process leading up to the constellation of commitments whose endorsement is being vindicated as the lesson properly to be learned from the earlier registering and reparative phases is the final, *recollective* phase of an episode of the experience of error. Recollection (Hegel's "Erinnerung") turns a *past* into a *history*. It transforms a mere description of past commitments into a progressive narrative of a sequence of lessons whereby how things really are, in themselves (according to one's current commitments) gradually came to be revealed, through that progressive sequence of ever-more-adequate appearances, culminating in one's current happy state of (as one takes it to be) *knowledge* of how things really are. A recollecting narrative is a narrative of *expressive* progress. It is a story about how what is now revealed to have been all along *implicit* in prior commitments, as the reality they were appearances of (the noumena behind the phenomena), gradually emerged to become fully *explicit*, showing up as what it really is, in the view currently endorsed, in which that process culminated. It is a story of how what things are in themselves ("an sich") becomes what they are for consciousness. A recollection accordingly exhibits past commitments that have been discarded because of their incompatibility with others as genuine (if only partially correct) appearances *of* reality as it is now known to be, and in that sense as not *merely* illusory.

This recollective phase of the experience of error is meant to explain 'of'-intentionality in terms of 'that'-intentionality—the representational dimension of thought in terms of its conceptual contentfulness. Conceptual contentfulness in Hegel's sense is what thoughts and facts (phenomena and noumena) can share: being articulated by relations of material

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

This recollective story about the representational dimension of conceptual content is, crucially, an *expressive* account of it. It explains how what was, according to each recollection,

always *implicit* (“an sich”, what things are in themselves), becomes ever more *explicit* (for consciousness). The recollective story is an *expressively* progressive one. The representational relation between senses and referents is established by displaying a sequence of appearances that are ever more adequate expressions of an underlying reality. In general Hegel thinks we can only understand what is implicit in terms of the expressive process by which it is made explicit. That is a recollective process. The underlying reality is construed as implicit in the sense of being a norm that all along governed the process of its gradual emergence into explicitness. Without at any earlier point being fully explicit to the consciousness undergoing the experience, according to the recollection that unveils it as what the appearances were appearances of, it nonetheless practically (hence, implicitly) governed the process. According to the retrospective rational reconstruction that is the recollection, it served as a normative standard for better and worse appearances, accordingly as they revealed (expressed) that reality more adequately. And according to the recollection, those assessments were efficacious. The metanorm that governs recollection (determining better and worse recollections) demands *expressive* progress: progress in making explicit what shows up as having been all along implicit. This recollective notion of expression is more fundamental than the notion of representation it is called on to explain.

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

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.¹³

(Hegel often uses circular imagery in this connection.) For the fact is seen as what drives its progressive revelation. How things actually are is recollectively revealed as normatively governing the process both deontically, as a standard of assessment of expressive success, and alethically, as that to which the episodes that count as expressively progressive are subjunctively sensitive. It is at once the cause of a course of experience and its goal.

Stories of this recollective-vindicating sort are familiar from various institutional practices. Old-fashioned histories of science typically took the form of pointing to some feature of current scientific theories (genes are encoded by sequences of DNA base-pairs, the division between subatomic particles described by Fermi-Dirac statistics and those described by Bose-Einstein statistics is exclusive and exhaustive...) and then offering a canned Whiggish account of the process by which this truth was gradually discovered, one feature emerging from this experiment or conceptual break-through, another from that one. False starts, wrong turns, and dead ends are ignored, except insofar as some bit of the truth is taken to have been revealed thereby. For another example, the final results of complex medical diagnoses are explained by telling stories of this sort: “Even though the patient *did* have an infection, the absence of cytokines in the blood showed that, contrary to what we had thought, the fever must be exogenous....” And—to invoke a comparison I have returned to repeatedly in this work—recollective vindications also play an absolutely essential role in jurisprudential practice. This is

¹³ T. S. Eliot “Little Gidding” V.

clearest in case law, and (because it is essentially, “case law all the way down”) especially common law. For there the principal form of justification a judge can offer for her application of a legal concept (strict liability, duty of care...) is a suitable rational reconstruction of prior applications, which are considered precedential in that they reveal explicitly some of the contours of the underlying law that is implicit in the juridical tradition.

Kant had the idea that representation is a normative concept. Something counts as a representing in virtue of being *responsible to* something else, which counts as represented by it in virtue of exercising *authority* over the representing by serving as a standard for assessments of its correctness *as* a representing. It is in precisely this sense that a recollective story treats the commitments it surveys as representings of the content currently treated as factual. The current commitment in which the sequence being reconstructed culminates is treated as authoritative for the previous commitments that sequence comprises (and them as responsible to it) in that it provides the standard for assessing the extent to which they are successful or adequate expressions (and so representations) of it. In picking out a trajectory from the actual experiences of error that led up to the currently endorsed conceptual content (all of which exhibit ‘that’-intentionality by standing in relations of incompatibility and consequence), a trajectory that is expressively progressive by that standard—thereby turning a mere past into an intelligible history of discovery—the recollection treats them as responsible *to* it in the sense required for them to be representations *of* it (to exhibit ‘of’-intentionality). It is the sort of process that institutes representational relations—the process whereby conceptual contents become representations “*to* (a) consciousness.”

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

Hegel strongly contrasts the way of thinking he wants to recommend—the expressive paradigm—with representational ways of thinking, his recollective elaboration of expression is designed to give semantic representationalism its due, by reconstructing in expressive terms what

representationalists were right about. Conceptual content does have a representational dimension, and it can and ought to be understood ultimately in recollective expressivist terms. To explain Hegel's expressivist rational reconstruction of representational relations we can use Frege's semantic vocabulary of sense and reference as an amphibious intermediary between representationalist and expressivist semantic idioms. On the one hand, it is recognizably a way of talking about representings and representeds. Senses do refer to, and in that sense represent, their referents. On the other hand, the senses that semantically determine reference are also thought of as intrinsically graspable. For Hegel, following Kant, that means they are conceptually contentful. Hegel's understanding of conceptual contentfulness as articulation by relations of material incompatibility and consequence provides a model of thoughts as senses.

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

III. From Metacategories of *Verstand* to *Vernunft*: Determinateness of Conceptual Content

At the end of each successful episode of the experience of error rational harmony has been restored to the subject's commitments. The incompatibility detected has been repaired and the resulting constellation of commitments recollectively vindicated by recollecting it as the result of a course of experience that has been selected and rationally reconstructed as an unbroken expressively progressive triumphalist narrative of revelation and discovery—as the gradual making explicit of what is presented as having been all along implicit. But Hegel takes it that *every* achievement of this sort of rational equilibrium is temporary. It is fated to be disrupted by the eruption of new anomalies. Acquiring new empirical commitments immediately (in the sense of noninferentially, perceptually), and mediately, by inferentially extracting consequences from one's current commitments (fulfilling one's ampliative rational task-responsibility) will inevitably, sooner or later, result in one's finding oneself once again with commitments that are incompatible with one another, by one's own lights (the contents one takes them to have). The plight of finite knowing and acting subjects metaphysically guarantees liability to empirical error and practical failure. The experience of error is inescapable. What I earlier called the “false starts, wrong turns, and dead ends” of inquiry can be retrospectively edited out of the sanitized, Whiggish vindicating recollective narrative, but they cannot be avoided going forward.

Why not? In short because the rational, conceptual character of the world and its stubborn recalcitrance to mastery by knowledge and agency are equally fundamental primordial features of the way things are. On the one hand, the world is lawful, articulated by alethic modal relations of incompatibility and necessary consequence, so conceptually contentful and graspable. (“To him who looks on the world rationally, the world looks rationally back,” Hegel says elsewhere.¹⁴) It is, in Hegel’s terms, thoroughly “mediated.” On the other hand, it is shot through with brute immediacy, which impinges on thought through perception. Kant, following the empiricist tradition, conceives the task of conceptualizing sensuous immediacy as an uncompletable, infinite task. For him, sensuous immediacy is conceptually inexhaustible. There is no aspect of what you see when you look at the palm of your hand that you cannot express in a perceptual judgment. But no matter how many such judgments you make, you will never run out of new, as yet unexpressed judgments that would codify genuine features of what you see. One of Hegel’s most original ideas is his understanding of the sense in which the immediacy of objective being outruns what can be captured conceptually in subjective thought, not in terms of its necessary *inexhaustibility* by empirical *judgments*, but in terms of the necessary *instability* of determinate empirical *concepts*.

For Hegel, the experience of error requires not just the revision of *beliefs* (doxastic commitments) but also of *meanings*—the concepts or conceptions that articulate empirical judgments. If my conception acid includes as circumstances of appropriate application tasting sour and as appropriate consequences of application turning Litmus paper red, then if I run

¹⁴ Introduction to *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, published separately as *Reason in History*, tr. R.S. Hartman 1953, p. 13; Suhrkamp Hegel edition, volume 12, p.23.

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

The manifestation of stubborn, residual immediacy in thought is the inevitability of the experience of error. Every recollectively vindicated, rationally harmonious constellation of commitments achieved along the way is fragile, precarious, and temporary—doomed eventually to be riven by incompatibility and unmasked as presenting one more appearance of a reality that is thereby shown to be elusive.

Hegel presents the tension between the ineluctability of error and the realistic possibility of genuine knowledge as not only a destructive, but also a productive one. Both express valid perspectives on what is always at once both the experience of error and the way of truth. The important thing is not to seize exclusively—and so one-sidedly—on either aspect, but to understand the nature of the process as one that necessarily shows up from *both* perspectives. It

is of the essence of the historical process of experience to afford both retrospective and prospective temporal perspectives on it. Looking back, from the vantage-point of each recollectively vindicated constellation of commitments resulting from the repair of acknowledged incompatibility, one sees unbroken epistemic expressive progress culminating in the achievement of genuine knowledge of truths, as construed by bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism. Looking forward, one sees the inevitable decay of each such beautiful harmony by the unavoidable advent of commitments incompatible with one another by their own lights, and the initiation of new trifold episodes of the experience of error. The retrospective point of view, recollectively producing by rational reconstruction an expressively progressive tradition in which what was implicit (*an sich*) becomes explicit for consciousness, makes visible the sense in which subjective thought can genuinely grasp the objective world: how things can be for consciousness what they are in themselves. The prospective point of view focuses on the ruptures occasioned by the disparities between successive recollective reconstructions, as what is endorsed by one is rejected by a later one. It makes visible the sense in which the immediacy of actual being, reflected in sensuous immediacy, inevitably outruns what is captured by any determinate conceptual (mediated) structure, inferentially articulated by relations of material incompatibility and consequence. One of Hegel's animating ideas is that the independence of immediacy (its distinctive authority over structures of mediation) is manifested in its role as a principle of instability, as providing a normative demand for change, for both rejection and further development of each constellation of determinate concepts and commitments articulated by them. The independence of mediation (its distinctive authority over immediacy) is manifested in all the retrospective recollective vindications of prior constellations of

commitments as genuine knowledge, as resulting from the expressively progressive revelation of reality by prior claims to knowledge.

Determinate negation, material incompatibility, is not only the fundamental *conceptual* structure, but also marks the moment of *immediacy* within what is conceptually articulated, whether on the side of being or of thought. Immediacy in the realm of being necessarily produces/reveals, via perception of cognitive error and practical failure, the incompatibilities of commitment that normatively oblige the knowing and acting subject to *do* something, to engage in the reparative and recollective phases of experience. The forward-looking obligation to repair acknowledged incompatibilities of commitment acknowledges error and the inadequacy of its conceptions. The backward-looking recollective obligation to rationalize as expressively progressive previous, now superseded, repairs and recollections institutes knowledge, truth, and determinate concepts whose incompatibilities and consequences track those articulating (in a different modal key) the objective world. Acknowledging this obligation by constructing retrospective expressively progressive recollective narratives is the form of Reason's march through history. It is what "looking on the world rationally" consists in.

The recollective process is also what Hegel calls "giving contingency the form of necessity." Objective immediacy, what brutally is, shows up cognitively (becomes something for consciousness, is expressed) as sensuous immediacy in the deliverances of commitments by perception. The "form of necessity" is a *normative* form. ("Necessary," "notwendig," for Kant meant "in accordance with a rule. That is why it had for him two species: natural necessity, articulated by alethic modal relations, and practical necessity, articulated by deontic normative

relations.) The intrusions of commitments arrived at noninferentially in perception give rise to anomalies through engendering incompatibilities. Giving those eruptions the form of necessity is incorporating them into an expressively progressive recollective narrative that exhibits them as the agents whereby the true contents of concepts are gradually revealed and become more explicit.

Understanding the experiential process, which comprises both what shows up when that process is viewed retrospectively and what shows up when it is viewed prospectively, so as to see truth and error as equally essential, complementary aspects of it—as two sides of one coin—requires reconceptualizing both truth and determinateness. The key in each case is to understand them not as properties, states, or relations that can be instantiated at a single time, but as structural features of enduring experiential processes. This is making the shift between the static modern metaconceptual structure Hegel calls “Verstand” and the dynamic successor metaconceptual structure he calls “Vernunft.” According to the categories of *Verstand*, as articulated by Kant, for instance, the understanding has available to it a stock of concepts that are determinate, in that it is already settled in advance what manifolds of intuition they can successfully synthesize. What is recognizably a cognate *Verstand* conception of determinateness shows up in Frege as the requirement that concepts fix extensions, in the sense of determining, for every possible object, whether that object does or does not fall under the concept. The view is that fixed, permanent truths can be formulated using concepts that are determinate in this sense, and that progress in knowledge consists in endorsing more and more such truths, and rejecting more and more falsehoods formulated in terms of those same determinate concepts. By

contrast, the metaconceptual standpoint of *Vernunft* focuses on the malleability of concepts. In the toy example of an experience of error mentioned above, a subject finds herself with commitments incompatible by her own lights because she endorses a concept of acid that includes tasting sour as a sufficient reason for applying the concept, and turning Litmus paper red a necessary consequence of its application. Immediate perceptual experience of a liquid that tastes sour and turns Litmus paper blue precipitates a crisis. While either of the perceptual judgments might be relinquished, progress can consist in amending the content attributed to the concept. Perhaps only substances that both taste sour and combine with metals to form salts should count as acids. Insofar as this emendation is successful, progress is made in that the subject deploys concepts that better track what really follows from what in the objective world. The experience of error obliges not only change of belief, but change of meaning.

The metaconceptual move that takes us from *vorstellen* to *begreifen* (*Verstand* to *Vernunft*) is the replacement of the model of experience as *representation*, an external relation between independently specifiable realms of representings and representeds, confronting each other across a gulf, by a model of experience as *expression*. This is an internal process of development whereby each single content, retrospectively recollectively identifiable as persisting throughout the process of its development, shows up originally in implicit form and is expressed or unfolds, becoming available in explicit form. Experience is the process whereby the determinate, and so mediated contents implicit in immediacy come to appear as explicitly mediated. Representational relations take their explanatorily subsidiary place as arising from one aspect of the activity of developing conceptual contents.

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

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

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

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

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

therein, and gives itself particular existence, is preserved as something that
recollects itself [*sich erinnert*]...

(The older Baillie translation has the somewhat more poetic “The truth is a vast Bacchanalian revel, with not a soul sober....”) In interpreting this allegory, it is important to keep in mind the two levels of concepts I have claimed are being considered. The surface topic is “shapes of Spirit,” various forms exhibited by the normativity articulating the thinkings and doings of self-conscious subjects, traditional, modern, and beyond. This is one of the places where Hegel explicitly marks that besides thoughts and concepts at this categorial metalevel, he is also addressing the nature and evolution of ground-level determinate thoughts and concepts. A characteristic feature of the “pragmatist semantic” reading I have been presenting here is “semantic descent”: focusing on what we are supposed to learn about the use and content of these ordinary empirical and practical “determinate” concepts and commitments. Here the partygoers participating in the moveable feast are those commitments: doxastic, practical, and inferential—in the broad sense that articulates conceptual content and so includes commitments concerning what is materially incompatible with (“determinately negates”) what. The revel is the process of experience. What matters about the image of their drunkenness is its picturing of the restless, woozy jostling and elbowing of each other as different contents of potential commitments that are incompatible with each other in the company of the others already on board seek a place at the table. Those that are forced out are immediately replaced by others, so the party continues, though with a shifting cast. The crucial contribution to the festivities that was made by the departed members, those who at some earlier point slipped insensible beneath the table, is still “preserved as recollected,” in the story the later revelers tell about how they got where they are.

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

Conceptual idealism (the *begreifen* that comprehends *vorstellen*) claims that that semantic, representational relation is both only to be understood expressively, in terms of recollective activity, and that it is actually produced or instituted by that activity. The distinctive kind of doing that is experience for Hegel is, in its reparative and recollective phases, shaping and determining the conceptual contents the subject endorses at the end of each tripartite episode. In that sense it is making or producing conceptions (conceptual contents)—for instance, of acids as what both taste sour and combine with metals to produce salts. This is one sense of “determining conceptual contents”: determining as making up. But the recollective process essentially includes a commitment to having *found* what it in this sense makes. It is a process of *discovery* of what has according to it all along been being expressed and represented, first less and then more adequately, by the sequence of always partly erroneous constellations of commitments in the expressively progressive trajectory retrospectively recollectively rationally

reconstructed. This is another sense of “determining conceptual contents”: determining as finding out.

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

Recollection and Recognition:
Semantic and Practical Dimensions of Hegel's *Phenomenology*

2019 Brentano Lectures, University of Vienna

Lecture 3:

**Magnanimity, Heroism, and Agency:
Recognition as Recollection¹⁵**

In my first lecture, I discussed the *social* dimension of discursiveness, in the form of Hegel's account of the institution of norms by reciprocal *recognition*. In my second lecture, I discussed the *historical* dimension of discursiveness, in the form of Hegel's account of the institution of semantic representational relations by rational *recollection*. Today's topic is the new kind of practical intentional agency that results when norm-instituting social *recognition* itself takes the form of historical rational *recollection*.

I. Introduction: Three Ages of Spirit

Hegel thinks that the most important event in human history—the single biggest thing that ever happened to us—is the extended transition from long-standing traditional forms of life to distinctively modern ones. The great thinkers of the Enlightenment—and in particular the

¹⁵ This lecture is adapted from *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*, forthcoming from Harvard University Press, 2019.

philosophers in the canonical tradition that leads from Descartes to Kant—worked out ideas that articulate the characteristically modern understanding both of our cognitive, practical, and political activity, and of the world we know about, and act in and on. But Hegel was the first to see modernity whole: the first to see those new Enlightenment modes of *understanding* as of a piece with the massive rolling *practical* changes in social, political, and economic institutions that gave rise to them and to which they gave voice—the first to see the Enlightenment as the form of consciousness and self-consciousness appropriate to a new world and a new way of being in the world.

To do that, he introduces and develops an original conception of the *subject* of this great sea-change: what he calls “*Geist*,” Spirit. *Geist* is us as discursive beings, knowers and doers, and it includes all of our norm-governed doings, thinkings, sayings, practices, and institutions, and all of their products.

Prelapsarian traditional understanding took normative statuses to be features of the objective world. How it is proper to behave, how things ought to be done, what things are “fitting,” proper relations of subordination and superiority are all thought of as central features of how things anyway are, like the weight of stones or the color of the sky. People’s stations and their corresponding duties are construed as being what they are antecedently to and independently of the practical attitudes of those whose stations and duties they are. It is the job of individual subjects to reflect those self-standing normative statuses in their attitudes, to shape their acknowledgements and attributions of authority and responsibility so that they fit the pre-existing normative facts. The principle that animates traditional *sittlich* forms of *Geist* is commitment to the *norm-governedness* or *status-dependence of normative attitudes*.

The contrasting core modern idea, articulated and developed by Enlightenment thinkers, is that there were no normative statuses of subordination and superiority, no authority and responsibility, until people started practically *taking* or *treating* each other *as* subordinates and superiors, authoritative and responsible. (“When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?”) It is the idea of the *attitude-dependence of normative statuses*. This idea takes a particularly clear and explicit form in social contract theories of political obligation. For there, *attitudes* of consent by the governed are treated as essential to the legitimate *authority*, the normative *status*, of those who govern, epitomized in the model of instituting normative statuses of reciprocal obligation by attitudes of intending to be bound, manifested practically by entering into an explicit contract or compact. On this model, norms are not found, but made. Normative statuses are instituted by social normative practical attitudes such as promising, agreeing, or contracting.

Hegel both sees the replacement of traditional thought, institutions, and selves by modern ones as a decisive, irrevocable advance, and diagnoses it as a disruption that inevitably incurs substantial costs. The cover-term he coins to characterize that unavoidable loss is “alienation,” *Entfremdung*. Although it has psychological consequences, alienation is not at base a psychological phenomenon. It is a distinctive metaphysical structure of normativity itself. It is a structure characterized by the absence of the *bindingness* of norms, a structure in which attitudes are no longer answerable or responsible to norms. The largest philosophical lesson Hegel thinks we can learn from thinking about the great structural shift of *Geist* from its premodern to its modern form is the result of the detailed interplay of gain and loss, advance and retreat, that

characterizes that transition. The right understanding of how these interwoven strands are related points the way, he thinks, towards the *third* stage in the development of *Geist*.

Such a third structure of *Geist* must retain the irreversible progress in self-consciousness of ourselves as free that consists in realizing the attitude-dependence of normative statuses, while re-achieving practical *sittlich* appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the way in which normative attitudes are obliged to respect and reflect norms that serve as standards of assessment for the correctness of those attitudes. *Sittlichkeit* is practically appreciating and responding to the obligation to conform our attitudes to the actual normative statuses those attitudes acknowledge and attribute. This is to aim at acknowledging and attributing what we and others are *really* committed and entitled to, our actual responsibilities and authority. It is the loss of this *sittlich* practical appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes that Hegel denominates “alienation,” and takes to be a hallmark of modernity. What we are alienated *from* is the norms that we have made, and that make us what we are.

So there is a tension between the claim (central to modernity) that normative statuses are instituted by normative attitudes and the claim (central to premodern understanding) that normative statuses provide the standards for assessment of the correctness of attitudes. How can we both make the norms and be genuinely governed by them? (Here one might think of Wittgenstein’s observation that if “whatever is going to seem right to me is right...that only means that here we can’t talk about ‘right.’”¹⁶) The third, postmodern stage of *Geist* is defined by its reconciliation of these opposed insights. How does Hegel propose that these two criteria of

¹⁶ *PI* §258.

adequacy on an account of the relation between normative attitudes and normative statuses can both be satisfied? The short answer, I think, is that our *past* attitudes institute norms that provide the normative standards of assessment for our *current* attitudes. Such a slogan conceals the rich fine-structure of his account, however.

He thinks that we institute norms that govern our attitudes by engaging in a special kind of process: *recollection* [*Erinnerung*]. Recollection retrospectively rationally reconstructs the prior applications of a concept, picking out an expressively progressive trajectory through them. To say that the rationally reconstructed tradition is “expressively progressive” is to say that it takes the form of the gradual emergence into explicitness of a determinate conceptual content, which provides a norm governing applications of that concept. That content is exhibited as having been all along implicit in actual applications of the concept. Each application reveals some contour of the concept. Recollection is a distinctive form of concept-constitutive practical rationality. It is a semantogenic doing: a kind of *making* that is the *finding* of determinate conceptual content. (It is, *inter alia*, the form of rationality Hegel himself practiced in inventing/discovering the concept of *Geist*.)

The process of recollection adopts an essentially *retrospective* perspective: “The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk....” It is this process that turns a mere *past* into a *history*, something with the edifying narrative structure of a *tradition*: a past as *comprehended*.¹⁷ It is “Reason’s

¹⁷ Hegel concludes the *Phenomenology* by emphasizing the constitutive significance of recollection for the higher sort of self-consciousness working through the book is supposed to make accessible to us [PG §808] : As its fulfilment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its withdrawal into itself in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to **recollection**. Thus absorbed in itself, it is sunk in the night of its self-consciousness; but in that night its vanished outer existence is preserved, and this transformed existence—the former one, but now reborn of the Spirit’s knowledge—is the new existence, a

march through history.” The idea of recollective rationality is one of Hegel’s orienting Big Ideas.

II. Traditional and Modern Practical Conceptions of Agency

In the rest of this talk I want to drill down by looking at a special case of that recollective reconciliation of traditional and modern structures of norm-governed and norm-instituting practices, and at the sort of understanding of them that is enabled by the metaconcepts of Hegelian *Vernunft*. The particular dimension of our *geistig* activities I will address is *intentional agency* and the self-conscious understanding of it, both theoretical and practical, that is an essential aspect of it.

Hegel calls the traditional *sittlich* practical understanding of intentional agency “heroic.” By this he means that agents take responsibility for their doings under *all* the descriptions true of those doings. No normative distinction is made between what was done intentionally, or what

new world and a new shape of Spirit. In the immediacy of this new existence the Spirit has to start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing from the experience of the earlier Spirits. But **recollection**, the inwardizing, of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of the substance.

...

The goal, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the **recollection** of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, comprehended History, form alike the inwardizing and the Calvary of absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone.

the agent knew he was doing, and what he did unintentionally and without realizing that that is what he was doing. Thus Oedipus is held responsible for killing his father and marrying his mother, even though he did not intend to do those things and was not aware that that is what he was doing. For those are still things he *did*, not just things that *happened*. (Anscombe: “I do what happens.”) Oedipus did intend to, and did, kill *that man* and marry *that woman*. On the traditional, heroic conception it is the normative statuses that matter, not the agent’s attitudes. Parricide and incest *ought not to be*. One should not act so as to incur the normative status of father-killer and mother-fucker. The “ought-to-do”s governing attitudes are just to be read off of the “ought-to-be”s that articulate statuses. Attitudes of knowing and intending matter only in determining *that* one is responsible for a deed, not for determining *what* one thereby did and is responsible for doing. The *status* one acquires by doing something is not itself construed as mitigated by or otherwise relativized in any way to the *attitudes* of intending and knowing in virtue of which it counts as one’s doing in the first place. That one did not mean to do what one did under some descriptions of it can engender *sympathy*, but it cannot diminish *responsibility*.

It is for this reason, Hegel thinks, that the traditional *heroic* practical conception of agency is inevitably always also a *tragic* conception. The tragedy does not consist in the transcendent awfulness of the outcome (which is pretty much what current usage has whittled the concept of tragedy down to). It consists in the fact that in acting at all one puts oneself at the mercy of forces outside of one’s knowledge and control. Those alien forces determine the content of one’s actual deed, what one turns out to have done and to be responsible for having done. Tragedy is the submission of the heroic agent to *fate*. The idea of fate does not invoke some sort of determinism or antecedent necessitation of outcome, but just those dark (because

unknowable and uncontrollable) forces that engulf and overwhelm what is launched by one's limited knowledge and intention, transforming it into deeds that reach far beyond those attitudes into an unforeseeable status of culpability. (Hegel quotes in this connection the proverb "When a flung stone leaves the hand, it belongs to the devil.") Shouldering the responsibility that fate in this sense brings down upon one who acts is tragic heroism. This is the intimate, mutually presupposing relation between *tragedy*, *fate*, and *heroism* that articulates the structure of ancient Greek normativity and *Geist*.

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

Those *attitudes* of agents, what they intend and believe, are taken to play constitutive roles in determining their normative *status* as culpable or admirable. This conception of responsibility as proportioned to intention and knowledge is the application to the practical understanding of intentional agency of the distinctively modern appreciation of the attitude-dependence of normative statuses.

The core of distinctively modern practical self-consciousness is for Hegel a special way of understanding what he calls “the ‘distinction that action implies’”: “that between what is purposed and what is accomplished in the realm of existence.”¹⁸ It is to distinguish two senses in which agents do things, a narrower and a wider one, and to restrict responsibility to what is done in the narrow sense.

It is the right of the of the will to recognize as its *action* [Handlung], and to accept *responsibility* for, only those aspects of its *deed* [Tat] which it knew to be presupposed within its end, and which were present in its *purpose* [Vorsatz]—I can be made *accountable* for a deed only if *my will was responsible* for it—the *right of knowledge*.¹⁹

There are “two aspects possessed by the practical consciousness, intention and deed (what is 'meant' or intended by the deed and the deed itself).²⁰

[T]hough any alteration as such, which is set on foot by the subjects' action, is its deed [Tat], still the subject does not for that reason recognize it as its action [Handlung], but only admits as its own that existence in the deed which lay in its

¹⁸ *RP*§114Z .

¹⁹ *RP*§117.

²⁰ *PG*§319.

knowledge and will, which was its purpose. Only for that does it hold itself responsible.²¹

Hegel does not consider the possibility of intention and knowledge coming apart from one another. It is interesting to note in this connection (particularly in the light of the aegis under which the present work is being presented) that Thomas Aquinas sees an important difference in their significance for attributions of moral responsibility between characterizations of an action which the agent endorsed as intentional and consequential characterizations the agent merely foresaw. His famous “doctrine of double effect” asserts that some characterizations of doings in virtue of which one would be maximally morally culpable if they were specifications of what one intended (either as an end or as a means) need not entail the same degree of moral culpability if they specify instead only consequences one *knew* would ensue in virtue of what one *did* intend.²² This subtle distinction both presupposes and further articulates and elaborates the fine structure of the conceptual and moral progress Hegel sees as an essential component of the practically self-conscious modern form of agency: the advance represented by acknowledging the normative significance of the distinction between intentional and consequential specifications of actions.

Hegel explicitly appeals to this distinction as marking the decisive difference between modern and traditional practical conceptions of agency;

The *heroic* self-consciousness (as in ancient tragedies like that of Oedipus) has not yet progressed from its unalloyed simplicity to reflect on the distinction

²¹ *Encyclopedia* §504.

²² *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica* [Thomas More Publishing, 1981], II-II, Qu. 64, Art.7.

between *deed* [Tat] and *action* [Handlung], between the external event and the purpose and knowledge of the circumstances, or to analyse the consequences minutely, but accepts responsibility for the deed in its entirety. [RP§118Z]

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

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

III. Postmodern Heroism: Recognition as Recollection

I have been using a particular regimented normative metavocabulary to render the terms Hegel uses to set out the contrast between the categories of *Verstand* and those of *Vernunft* (what Hegel makes of Kant's technical terms "understanding" and "reason"). My idiom translates Hegel's talk of what subjects are *in* themselves and what they are *for* themselves and for others into talk of normative *statuses* and normative *attitudes*, respectively. Under the heading of normative *statuses*, Hegel's talk of *independence* and *dependence* is translated into talk about *authority* and *responsibility*. Under the heading of normative *attitudes*, his talk of what subjects are for *themselves* and for *others* is translated into talk about *acknowledging* responsibility or *claiming* authority oneself, and *attributing* those statuses to others.

In these terms, the metaconception of *Vernunft* Hegel develops and recommends is what explains the reciprocity of the normative *statuses* of authority and responsibility (the sense in which they are always two sides of one coin), the reciprocity of normative cognitive *attitudes* of acknowledging and attributing authority and responsibility, and the reciprocal dependences *between* these reciprocal relations among statuses and among attitudes. In doing so, it reconciles the distinctively *modern* insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses—the sense in which statuses of authority and responsibility are instituted by reciprocal cognitive attitudes—with the *traditional* appreciation of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the dimension along which attributions and acknowledgments of commitments (responsibilities undertaken by exercising one's authority to do so) answer for their correctness to what agents are *really*

committed to and responsible for. The alienation that is the worm in the shining apple of modernity is the practical incapacity to see how normative statuses can *both* be instituted by normative attitudes *and* transcend those attitudes so as genuinely to govern and constrain them.

Kant's *autonomy* version of the Enlightenment idea that normative statuses are instituted by normative attitudes takes it that knowing and acting subjects are distinguished from merely natural creatures by a distinctive sort of *authority* they have. That is the authority to *commit* themselves—the normative capacity of *making* themselves responsible by *taking* themselves to be responsible. Hegel applauds both the idea that the basic normative status is the authority to adopt normative attitudes (for Kant, to acknowledge commitments), and the idea that normative statuses (commitments, that is, responsibilities) are instituted by normative attitudes. Hegel objects to the idea that any individual's attitudes can *immediately constitute* normative statuses. That sort of authority he sees as an instance of the practical conception of normativity in terms of *pure* independence (authority without commensurate responsibility) characteristic of the Master, whose commands unilaterally institute obligations (responsibilities) for the Slave. As such, it is an instance of the traditional practical understanding of normativity in terms of a structure of subordination and obedience. And from Hegel's point of view it is a flaw in the Kantian autonomy account that *this* foundational normative status—the distinctive kind of authority to commit oneself, in virtue of which one is a discursive subject of cognitive commitments as to how things are and practical commitments as to how things shall be—is *not* construed by Kant as itself instituted by normative attitudes. It is treated as just a brute metaphysical fact.

Hegel's idea is that we should understand the commitments of normative subjects as instituted not by their own attitudes of acknowledgement alone (as Kant's autonomy model has it), but only by those attitudes when suitably complemented by attributions of those commitments to them by *others*, who attribute to them the authority so to commit themselves, and so *hold* them responsible. That is, the authority to commit *oneself* is itself instituted in part also by the attitudes of *others*, who attribute it. Hegel's term for the attitude of attributing the basic Kantian normative status that is the authority to adopt a status by adopting an attitude—making oneself responsible by taking oneself to be responsible—is “recognition” [Anerkennung]. In place of Kant's *individualistic autonomy* model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes he proposes a *social recognition* model.

According to that model, normative statuses are instituted by *reciprocal recognition*. To *be* responsible one must, as Kant already insisted, in the first instance *acknowledge* that responsibility—have bound oneself by a norm.²³ But one must also be *held* responsible by others, who *attribute* it, to whom one attributes the authority to adopt such authoritative recognitive attitudes. To attribute to someone the authority to hold one responsible, that is, to attribute commitments in a partly constitutive way, is to *recognize* that other subject. Hegelian recognitive attitudes, like Kantian autonomous attitudes, institute normative statuses. But they do so only when suitably socially complemented. The recognitive authority of individual

²³ I say “in the first instance” because in addition to the ground-level cognitive and practical commitments that are Kantian judgments and endorsements of practical maxims, Kant also is concerned with *categorical* commitments. These are commitments that are implicit in and explicative of judging and acting intentionally. These categorical responsibilities are not attitude-dependent in the same way the ground-level cognitive and practical commitments are. They are implicit in adopting normative attitudes at all. The discovery of this sort of background commitment, and the concepts that articulate this kind of discursive commitment, is hugely important to Kant, and, following him, to Hegel. But I suppress consideration of it here. (I discuss the subsequent development of this idea in a preliminary way in the first chapter of *From Empiricism to Expressivism*.)

normative subjects and of their cognitive communities are complementary and reciprocally dependent, that is, they are *responsible to* each other as well as *authoritative over* each other.

On the cognitive picture, normative statuses are all instituted by normative attitudes, but only when those attitudes exhibit a particular *social* structure: the structure of reciprocal recognition. Normative attitudes of acknowledging oneself and attributing responsibilities to others, and of claiming or exercising authority for oneself and acknowledging the authority of or attributing authority to others, must be complementary to be efficacious. And in such a structure the normative statuses of authority and responsibility those cognitive attitudes institute are also always reciprocal and co-ordinate.

One might (I think one clearly ought) to grant that there is at least *a* sense of “normative status,” paradigmatically of “responsibility” and “authority,” that is sensibly construed as socially instituted by reciprocal cognitive attitudes. Even so, one might want to object that there are normative statuses that are more objective than these intersubjectively constituted ones. What is left out of the picture of normative statuses as instituted by reciprocal cognitive attitudes, one wants to say, is the fact that some normative statuses are objective in a sense that lets them serve as normative standards for assessment of the correctness of attitudes of attributing or claiming them.

Just so. The attitude-dependence of normative statuses, which motivates the models both of the basic Kantian normative meta-status of *autonomy* and of the basic Hegelian normative meta-status of *reciprocal recognition*, must somehow be balanced by acknowledgment of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the sense in which those attitudes of acknowledging

and attributing normative statuses are themselves responsible to the statuses that subjects actually have—the sense in which those attitudes are themselves norm-governed. Understanding that aspect of the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses, and incorporating that understanding in our practices and institutions, is what is required to move *Geist* from its modern to its postmodern phase. Hegel tells us that we are to do that by moving from practically construing ourselves and our discursive activities according to metaconcepts exhibiting the structure of *Verstand* to construing ourselves and our discursive activities according to metaconcepts exhibiting the structure of *Vernunft*.

The key to understanding the way Hegel moves beyond the *basic* Hegelian normative statuses socially instituted by *synchronic reciprocal relations* of recognitive attitudes consists in appreciating the orthogonal but complementary *diachronic historical* dimension of recognitive *processes*. It is in particular the *recollective* phase of diachronic recognitive processes that explains the attitude-transcendence of normative statuses, which provide standards for normative assessment of the correctness of attitudes. That includes the special cognitive representational norms according to which representing attitudes are responsible for their correctness to standards set by what counts as represented by those representings just in virtue of exercising that distinctive kind of authority over them. Reason understands discursive norms, both practical and cognitive, according to the categories of *Vernunft* as features of essentially social and historical recognitive processes, developing in tandem with the attitudes that articulate them. Understanding operating according to the categories of *Verstand* is blind to both the social and the historical dimensions of conceptual norms.

IV. Ushering in the Third Age of Spirit by the Breaking of the Hard Heart:

From Niederträchtig Blaming to Edelmütig Confession and Forgiveness

Let us look more closely at how Hegel describes and motivates the transition to the third age of *Geist*. The *Spirit* chapter of the *Phenomenology* rehearses the progressive development from the traditional to the modern structure of *Geist*, so as to prepare us readers for the epiphany in which that development culminates: the envisaged transition to the third, *postmodern* stage, the age of *trust*. Hegel introduces this newly self-conscious form of normativity (and hence subjectivity) in the rhetorical form of a pair of allegories: the allegory of the hero and his valet, and the allegory of the penitent confessing his transgression to the hard-hearted, unforgiving judge.

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

“No man is a hero to his valet;

followed by his own twist on it:

not, however, because the man is not a hero, but because the valet—is a

valet...”²⁴

The hero is allegorical for one who acts out of appreciation of his duty, one who fulfills his responsibilities, one who acts as he ought, as he is committed to act, one who in his practical attitudes and actions acknowledges the bindingness or authority of norms. “Valet” is the English translation of the German “Kammerdiener,” literally, room-servant. The valet in the allegory

²⁴ PG [665].

sees the attitudes of the hero not as governed by and expressive of his acknowledgment of norms, but as the product of his immediate sensuous desires and contingent particular inclinations. The valet views what the hero does genealogically, in resolutely naturalistic, nonnormative, reductive terms, and so

...explains [the action] as resulting...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].... If the action is accompanied by fame, then it knows this inner aspect to be a desire for fame.....[T]he 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.

The *Kammerdiener* stands for a view that explains all attitudes in terms of other attitudes, without needing to appeal to governing norms or statuses that they are attitudes towards and acknowledgments of. Hegel does not deny that this sort of explanation in terms of attitudes alone can be done. He thinks that the norm-blind reductive naturalistic genealogical perspective is an always available, albeit one-sided way to look at exercises of intentional agency.

But we can ask: what sort of disagreement is it that divides the *Kammerdiener* and the “friend of the norms” for whom some heroes really are heroes? Is it a cognitive, matter-of-factual disagreement about what there is in the objective world? After all, for Hegel, modernity

was right that normative statuses are attitude-dependent. Hegel diagnoses the issue instead as a difference in meta-attitude. He denominates the norm-blind reductive naturalism of attitudes, for which the *Kammerdiener* stands, *debasement*: “niederträchtig” (literally, something like “pulling down or under”). The contrasting, norm-sensitive, status-responsive, hero-acknowledging meta-attitude that takes some attitudes to be themselves genuinely norm-sensitive and norm-acknowledging he calls *magnanimous*: “edelmütig” (literally: noble spirited). So perhaps there is just a subjective practical choice to be made, depending on one’s preference for tough-minded, skeptical *Niederträchtigkeit* or tender-minded, generous *Edelmütigkeit*? That is not Hegel’s view either. Those two possibilities—matter of objective fact or subjective preference—exhaust the possibilities that modern *Verstand* admits. He thinks rather that in being discursive beings at all, in believing and acting, we have already implicitly committed ourselves to an *edelmütig* meta-attitude. This is a possibility afforded by *Vernunft*, which, when it comes to explicit self-consciousness, ushers in *Geist* in its fully self-conscious, postmodern form.

The issue addressed by the allegory of the *Kammerdiener* concerns the intelligibility of the traditional idea of the status-dependence of normative attitudes in the face of the modern insight into the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. The *Kammerdiener* stands for the self-sufficiency, the explanatory sovereignty, of attitudes. But then one must ask: what room is left for the authority and efficacy of norms—for the idea that normative statuses of authority and responsibility, what one is really entitled or committed to, make a real difference to attitudes that accordingly deserve to be thought of as *acknowledgments* of those norms?

Normative governance of attitudes by norms has two dimensions, deontic and alethic. First, the norms (normative statuses) serve as *standards for assessment of the correctness of*

attitudes. My attitudes of acknowledging a commitment myself, or attributing a commitment to others, are correct just in case we really are committed—in case those attitudes properly reflect the statuses they are attitudes towards. This is what it is for the attitudes in question to be *normative* attitudes: attitudes towards norms, attitudes of acknowledging or attributing normative statuses. Second, the norms they are attitudes towards should make a difference to the adoption of those attitudes. The attitudes must be *subjunctively sensitive* to the normative statuses they acknowledge and attribute. This is to say that the norms are efficacious, in that *if* the content of the norm being acknowledged or attributed *were* (or *had been*) different, the attitude *would be* different.

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

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

The challenge to the intelligibility of normative governance comes from the idea that the authority of norms over attitudes must be *total* in order to be *genuine*. It is a manifestation of the deformed conception of *pure independence*: the idea that authority (normative independence) is undercut by any sort of correlative responsibility to (dependence on) anything else. This is the practical normative conception Hegel criticizes allegorically under the rubric of “Mastery.” Hegel sees Kant as perfectly distilling the essence of the modern form of this conception, as part of his otherwise progressive understanding of normativity in terms of autonomy. As a result,

Kant adopts a *contraction* strategy, in which genuine doings shrink down to mere willings, since every more robust sense of action involves responsibility to other factors, subjective and objective, which are not themselves in the same dual sense governed by the norm that rationalizes the willing. In the allegory, the hard-hearted judge is the Kantian rigorist, who takes it that the penitent's confession of an admixture of non-normative motives shows that the action does not (also) express the acknowledgment of a norm, and so must be judged lawless. The affinity to the reductive naturalism of the *Kammerdiener* should be clear. For there, too, the mere possibility of a non-normative, reductive naturalistic explanation of attitudes is taken to pre-empt the normative governance explanation, and in that sense to deny the authority of the norm. If the normative governance account of an attitude has a rival, it is taken to have no authority at all. Independence is seen as incompatible with any sort of dependence. Any correlative responsibility undermines claims of authority.

Unlike the *Kammerdiener* allegory, the allegory of the hard-hearted judge is extended to provide a path forward to a proper understanding of the status-dependence of normative attitudes. Hegel presents the structural transition from modern to post-modern conceptions of agency in the form of a parable, a narrative recounting sequential stages in the relationship between an "evil consciousness" and a "hard-hearted judge": evil, judgment, confession, refusal of reciprocal confession, the breaking of the hard heart and confession by the judge, forgiveness, 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.") This is the final, *vernünftig*, post-modern form of reciprocal recognition, and so, of normativity

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

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

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

Further, it is hypocrisy, because it passes off such judging, not as another manner of being wicked, but as the correct consciousness of the action, setting itself up in this unreality and conceit of knowing well and better above the deeds it discredits, and wanting its words without deeds to be taken for a superior kind of reality.²⁵

The judge’s attitudes are exclusively adopted from the perspective of normative *assessment*.

²⁵ PG 666.

The judge as assessor does not identify with the perspective of the deliberating agent, or even acknowledge the essential complementary roles in constituting normative statuses played by attitudes of assessment and deliberation—that is, the crucial social-perspectival distinction of attitudes of *attribution to another* and *acknowledgment oneself* of practical commitments.

The point of this episode in the allegory is to enforce the contrast with the next step. The “breaking of the hard heart” describes the adoption by the assessing consciousness of the appropriate magnanimous *edelmütig* recognitive response to the petition for recognition that is the penitent’s confession. That response Hegel denominates “forgiveness” [Verzeihung]. To understand the structure of normativity that gives *Geist* its characteristic postmodern shape, we must understand the constellation of reciprocal recognitive attitudes that institutes that structure. This is recognition in the form of mutual confession and forgiveness: the structure I am calling “trust.” As I read the allegory, the shift to forgiveness that is the breaking of the judge’s hard heart is a move from the judge merely *attributing* to the agent responsibility for the deed to the judge practically *acknowledging* his *own* responsibility for that same deed. As such, it is an act of *identification with* the doer, by making himself co-responsible for what was done. The appropriate response to confession of an incapacity to produce deeds that are simply and purely governed by norms is for the judge to make a corresponding confession, to acknowledge “I am as you are.” This is an admission that the judge, like the agent, is *also* doomed to act and assess from a mixture of attitudes that *are* acknowledgments of governing norms and attitudes that are *not* such acknowledgements. (It’s slogan is: “We’re all bozos on this bus.”)

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

But what counts as "*better*" consequences? The standard for such normative assessments of consequences is set by the other, *recollective* dimension of forgiveness. The *reparative* responsibility to ameliorate the consequences of the doing being forgiven must be understood in terms of recollection. The aim is to make the whole that results from one's current action, thought of as a contribution to a tradition, *more fully and successfully recollectable* than that tradition would otherwise be. It is the norms of recollection that both determine what count as "*better*" consequences, and to which contributing to such consequences must be subjunctively sensitive.

Recognition in the form of *recollective forgiveness* is the key to understanding norm-governedness in general. Taking recollective responsibility for another's doing is practically acknowledging the obligation to tell and endorse 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 in the sense of *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 attitude of endorsing that (deontically) licensed and (alethically) initiated the performance. The imputed intention in the sense of *Absicht* must be exhibited as normatively governing the doing in the dual sense both of serving as a normative standard for assessment of the practical attitudes it governs (each specification of the doing being thought of as an acknowledgment of that norm), and as being the norm that those attitudes can be seen to have been subjunctively sensitive to, in the sense that had the norm been different, so would the attitudes.

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. In forgiving, one makes oneself responsible for the emerging norm one attributes as the implicit *Absicht* of the deed. This is *identifying with* the agent, in the sense of risking and if need be sacrificing one's own

attitudes, by subjecting them to normative assessment according to the norm one both attributes and acknowledges, and being subjunctively sensitive to that norm in one's own attitudes. In this specific sense, the forgiving agent acknowledges the doing as its own, as the doing not *only* of the agent who initiated it, but *also* of the forgiving recollector.

Forgiving recollection can be understood on the model of institutional common or case-law jurisprudential practices. In that setting the current judge rationally reconstructs the tradition by selecting a trajectory of prior precedential decisions that are expressively progressive, in that they reveal the gradual emergence into explicitness of a norm (the content of a law) that can be seen to have implicitly governed (in the dual sense of serving as a standard and having the precedential attitudes be revealed as subjunctively sensitive to it) all the decisions (attitudes) in the reconstructed tradition. The current judge's decision in the present case is then justified by appeal to that norm. The norm that is seen as emerging from the rationally reconstructed tradition of decisions sets the standard for normative assessment by future judges of the current decision, which claims to be subjunctively sensitive to that very norm. So the recollecting judge subjects herself to (acknowledges the authority of) the norm she retrospectively discerns. The more of the prior decisions the recollection rationalizes and exhibits as expressive of the norm, the better the recollective warrant that norm provides for the current decision. Whatever residue there is of decisions that *cannot* be fit into the retrospectively rationally reconstructed tradition, as precedentially rationalizing and expressive of the norm, increases the scope for criticism of the current decision by future judges, who may or may not acknowledge it as correct and itself precedential. For the only *authority* the decision has for *future* decisions derives from its *responsibility* to the tradition of *prior* decisions.

Forgiving (recollectively recognizing), on this account, is hard work. It cannot be brought off with a single, sweeping, abstractly general gesture: “I forgive you for what you did.” One could always *say* that, but saying it would not make it so. Besides commitment to practically affect the consequences of the doing one is forgiving, one must also produce a concrete recollective reconstruction of the deed, under all of its intentional and consequential specifications. Recollection is a *making*—the crafting of a distinctive kind of narrative—that is successful only insofar as it ends up being recognizable as having the form of a *finding* of a norm as always-already having been implicit. Doing that, Hegel says, is giving *contingency* the normative form of *necessity*: showing how what *is* is as it *ought* to be. Recollection is the narrative genre in which the rationalization of decisions appealing to common or case law also belongs. One must recruit and assemble the raw materials one inherits so as to exhibit a norm one can endorse oneself as always having governed the tradition to which one oneself belongs, with which one oneself identifies—a tradition that shows up as progressively revealing a governing norm, making ever more explicit what was all along implicit. The expressively progressive tradition discerned culminates (for now) in the consequential specification of the doing that is the recollection itself.

V. Failures of Forgiveness

What if what one is given to work with is *too* hard to forgive? What if the subject of the attitude that is being forgiven as part of the larger enterprise of forgiving something upstream of it is in fact dispositionally unresponsive to the verdict of the norm? What if (as the *Kammerdiener* alleges) it in fact is sensitive only to other concerns particular to, attitudes of, its subject? It seems that the criteria of adequacy for *successful* forgiveness, both reparative and

recollective, are in many cases *impossible* to satisfy. Some things people have done (both ourselves and others), we want to say, are simply *unforgivable*. (The last century or so provides a host of notorious, alarmingly large-scale candidates.) In some cases, though we might try to mitigate the consequences of evil doings, we just have no idea at all how to go about discerning the emergence of a governing norm we could endorse ourselves. And this situation does not just arise in extraordinary or exceptional cases. Any actual recollective story will involve strains: elements, aspects, or descriptions 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.

Indeed. But now we must ask: whose fault is it that the doing is unforgivable—the doer or the forgiver? Is the failure that of the bad agent or of the bad recollector? Is it a matter of how things anyway just are, given what was done, considered as a settled fact? Or is it because the recollector couldn't come up with a more norm-responsive narrative? The first is the attitude of the *unsittlich valet*, for whom no-one is a practically norm-acknowledging *hero*, in the sense of being genuinely responsive and sensitive to norms. To treat the recollective failure as *wholly* the fault of the doer, to take it as simply an objective fact that there is no norm we could endorse that governs the deed as the assessor inherits it, is to adopt exactly the blaming practical attitude of the hard-hearted judge—an attitude Hegel criticizes as *niederträchtig*. The contrasting magnanimous *edelmütig* attitude he recollectively recommends as implicit in the idea of norm-governedness as such is rather to identify with the doer, to take (co-)responsibility for the doing. That is to acknowledge at least equal responsibility on the part of the unsuccessful forgiver. For the issue is not properly posed in alethic modal terms of the *possibility* or *impossibility* of

forgiving what was done. It is rather a deontic normative matter. Paying one's dues as a member of a recognitive community structured by trust is acknowledging that one is always already implicitly *committed* to forgiving, *responsible for* forgiving what one's fellows do or have done. We have here a Hegelian version of a Kantian regulative ideal. That governing regulative ideal is "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." One can be *committed* to that ideal (normatively governed by it in the dual deontic and alethic sense) even if one must confess that in many cases one *cannot* understand—and so forgive—all.

It might well be that one is in fact incapable of fulfilling that commitment, of carrying out that responsibility. If and insofar as that is so, it is a normative failure that the unsuccessful would-be forgiver should *confess*. To take proper recognitive recollective responsibility requires the forgiving agent to confess her own inadequacy to the recollective task. Your confession of a failure of your practical attitudes appropriately to acknowledge a norm is a petition for my recognition in the form of my forgiving taking of (co-)responsibility for your doing. My subsequent failure to adopt adequately forgiving recollective recognitive attitudes is something I am in turn responsible for confessing. That confession is itself an act of identification with you: "I am as you are." My attitudes, like yours, fail adequately to satisfy the norms that they nonetheless acknowledge *as* binding, *as* governing those attitudes. For one acknowledges an obligation (the bindingness of a governing norm) insofar as one confesses the extent to which one has been unresponsive to the demands of the recollective norm, unable properly to fulfill a responsibility one acknowledges. And one is genuinely sensitive to that normative demand in making such a confession. Confessing is what one must do to *make* it the case that one is in fact sensitive to the norm recollected as governing the attitudes that make up the tradition one has

discerned (including one's own attitudes), even though one is incapable of fulfilling the reparative and recollective responsibility one thereby acknowledges.

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 might know more or be better at it). That one *cannot* successfully tell a recollective story is not what matters. That is a deontic failure, relative to one's commitments. It is something to be *confessed*, in *trust* that that failure, too, can be *forgiven*. The well-meaning but incompetent forgiving recollector's confession, like that of the contrite agent, is a petition for recognition in the form of forgiveness. The trusting confession of recollective failure completes the identification of the one playing the role of assessor with the one playing the role of agent. The recognitive attitudes of forgiveness and confession emerge as two sides of one coin, two aspects of the symmetric recognitive structure: the norm-instituting structure of *trust*. Its slogan is: "Attribute responsibility forgivingly, acknowledge responsibility contritely." Or as William Blake puts it: "Down through all eternity,/ I forgive you and you forgive me." In a normative community with this recognitive structure, everyone forgives to the limits of their ability, and everyone confesses those limits, and trusts that they, too, will be forgiven for them. (Compare: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.") But the most telling formulation of 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.*"

VI. Conclusion

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, *vernünftig* form of reciprocal recognition as confession and forgiveness is essentially *historical*. The attitude-governing norms it institutes and acknowledges have the rich diachronic recognitive form of *traditions*. Hegel practices forgiving recollection, retrospectively rationally reconstructing expressively progressive traditions, in his own accounts of intellectual and cultural history, and in the way he reads the history of art, religion, and especially, philosophy. It is what I mean to be practicing in telling this story.

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

appreciation of the authority of norms over attitudes: the sense in which attitudes are responsible to (governed by) norms they acknowledge and attribute as genuinely binding.

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

Agency in the age of trust re-achieves the heroic character—so striking in the original ancient form of agency—that was pushed out by the ironic distancing and alienation from norms essential to the achievement of individual self-consciousness that is the triumph of modern over traditional forms of normative life. Central to heroism was what Hegel calls “character”: the decisive *sittlich* identification of an individual agent with the norms: practically treating the norms as authoritative over and binding on one’s attitudes. This is acknowledgment of the status-dependence of normative attitudes, of one’s attitudes as norm-governed. The “ought-to-do”s governing normative attitudes (acknowledged or attributed responsibilities) are understood as wholly determined by the “ought-to-be”s that articulate normative statuses (what someone is really responsible for or committed to: their duty). As a result, the heroic agent takes

responsibility for every aspect of his act. If some feature of it is not as it ought to be, that is confessed to be the agent's responsibility, whether or not it was intended or foreseen. Compared to the contracted modern conception, the heroic conception makes the agent primarily responsible for a much-expanded deed, stretching out to include distant, unanticipated consequences. For this reason, traditional heroism is essentially tragic: it requires subjecting oneself to the dark, unknowable power of fate, identifying with what one is made by forces beyond one's knowledge and control. Shouldering the responsibility that fate in this sense brings down upon one who acts is tragic heroism.

Heroism in the age of trust is like heroism in the age of tragedy in its *sittlich* acknowledgement of the bindingness of norms, in the sense of their governing authority over normative attitudes, the status-dependence of those attitudes. There are norms that set standards for assessment of the correctness of our attitudes of acknowledging and attributing responsibility and authority, and it is the responsibility of each agent to be sensitive to those norms, shaping her attitudes accordingly. Each forgiving retrospective recollective rational reconstruction of an expressively progressive tradition of attitudes is responsible for discerning just such governing norms. And where the cramped and contracted modern practical conception of agency drew a bright line between normatively attributable and assessable aspects of each doing and non-normative ones—between what the agent can properly be held responsible for, because done knowingly or intentionally and what is done only in the sense of happening because of such doings in the narrow sense—the trusting conception is heroic, like the tragic conception, in that responsibility is total. Responsibility is taken for the whole deed. There is no aspect of intentional doings that overflows and falls outside the normative realm of responsibility—no

specification of the deed for which no-one takes responsibility. In *Geist* with the recognitive structure of trust, responsibility for the deed is shared between the agent whose practical attitudes initiated the doing and the members of her recognitive community, who take it as their own by committing themselves to forgiving it.

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

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

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.²⁶

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, essential, recognitively complementary sense). For all share responsibility for and authority over each action. The distinctive, essential role played by individual agents is not obliterated, for the responsibility and authority acknowledged by and attributed to the initiating agent is different from the reparative and recollective responsibility and authority acknowledged by those who take up the burden of forgiving the agent. Every deed now shows up both as a practical contribution to the content of all that came before it, and as acknowledging a recollective responsibility with respect to all those deeds. The temporally extended, historically structured 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 own 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’.”²⁷

End

²⁶ PG 669.

²⁷ PG 177.