

Part Five **Hegel on the Historicity of Normativity**

Lecture 18

Confession and Forgiveness, Recollection and Trust

I. *Niederträchtig* Assessment

The final movement of the long *Spirit* chapter of the *Phenomenology* is discussed in its concluding eleven paragraphs. It is here that Hegel sketches the way forward out of modernity to a more adequately self-conscious structure of recognition, and so of selves, norms, and communities. The text that describes the transition to the third stage in the development of Spirit is gnomic, dark, and allegorical. It takes the form of a parable, a narrative recounting sequential stages in the relationship between an “evil consciousness” [PG 661] and a “hard-hearted judge” [PG 669–670]: evil [PG 661–662], judgment [PG 662–666], confession [666], refusal of reciprocal confession [PG 667–668], the breaking of the hard heart and confession by the judge [PG 669], forgiveness [PG 669–671], and the achievement of a new kind of community. (“The reconciling Yea, in which the two ‘I’s let go their antithetical existence, is the existence of the ‘I’ which has expanded into a duality.” [PG 671]) Our task is to read the allegory—in this case, so as to understand the nature of this final form of mutual recognition as reciprocal confession and forgiveness. Unlike the earlier stories, this one outlines something that has not happened yet: a future development of Spirit, of which Hegel is the prophet: the making explicit of something already implicit, whose occurrence is to usher in the next phase in our history.

The two parties to this morality tale, the judged and the judging consciousness, personify the two social perspectives on the application of concepts in judgment and exercises of practical agency that are familiar to us from our consideration of Hegel’s theory of action. These are the first-person context of deliberation and the third-person context of assessment. The one judged makes himself responsible, by applying a concept, and the judge holds him responsible for that application. The relations between the judging and the judged individuals are recognitive ones: the relations that articulate their self-consciousness and structure their community. As our story

begins, the cognitive attitudes in virtue of which the acting consciousness is denominated “evil” or “wicked” [böse], and the judge “hard-hearted,” are *niederträchtig* ones.

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

What is wrong with *Niederträchtigkeit* is that such attitudes institute *alienated* cognitive structures. In a social structure of self-consciousness of this kind, an individual’s judgments and actions are not intelligible as such, to himself or to others. For what he does cannot be practically understood as the application of (the binding of himself by) determinately contentful conceptual norms. We need to be clear about the relations between

1. *Niederträchtigkeit*, as a practical attitude of identification with, hence sacrifice for, the disparity that action and consciousness involve, which *produces* that disparity in a distinctively alienated form;
2. *Alienation*, as a cognitive structure that is defective in making incomprehensible the normative dimension of the activities of individuals and the practices of communities that exhibit that structure (a failure of self-consciousness); and
3. *Asymmetry* of recognition as its characteristic structural defect, and as resulting from practically applying categories of immediacy or pure independence (the conception of authority and responsibility epitomized by the Master).

The first observation to make is that one way recognition can be nonreciprocal or nonsymmetrical is if the norms that are applied by the people who are deliberating about what to do and justifying what they are doing are not the same norms that are applied by the people attributing those doings and assessing those justifications. Against this background, let us look at what Hegel says about how the judging consciousness applies different standards to the assessment of action than does the agent himself. “The consciousness of an act declares its specific action to be a duty.” [PG 665] This is how the agent justifies his action: by saying (here using Kantian terminology) that it falls under a norm, that it is correct or required. Doing this is exhibiting a normative attitude, portraying what is done as an acknowledgment of a norm as binding. In a certain sense, this attitude is the end of the matter for the agent. He can do only what he *takes* to be his duty. When he has settled that, he has settled what to do. His normative

attitude, his *acknowledgment* of a commitment, is the form in which his normative status, what he is really committed to, shows up for him. “Conscience” [Gewissen] is Hegel’s term for the metanormative conception according to which that attitude ought also to settle things (be authoritative for) those who *assess* the correctness of what the agent does. As long as he did what he *took* to be his duty, he acted conscientiously (i.e., out of respect for duty), and that is supposed to be the only basis on which he can be assessed. Having seen the fatal structural flaw in this strategy—the way the notion of duty goes missing in it—we (the phenomenological “we,” Hegel’s readers) are moving on to consider a successor strategy that does retain a difference between the context of assessment and that of appraisal.

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

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

norm is authoritative, unless it is *wholly* authoritative, it cannot be understood as authoritative at all.

But what, exactly, is the content of the indictment delivered by the judging consciousness and, at the next stage in the parable, confessed by the acting consciousness? I think we should understand it as comprising two related, but distinct claims. First, and most obviously, it is always possible to offer a reductive, *Kammerdiener*'s account of the etiology of an action in terms of attitudes rather than norms, inclinations rather than obligations, causes rather than reasons ("selfish motives," "particularity," "the personal aspect"). We need not accept the agent's claim to be sensitive to norms, reasons, the standards of correctness for the application of concepts. In place of a kantian explanation in terms of what are often called "external reasons," we can always give a humean explanation in terms of "internal reasons": appeal to the subjective desires of the agent as motives instead of to the agent's obligations as reasons. From this point of view the agent shows up not only as bad, in the sense of not really responsive to norms, but also as hypocritical. [PG 663–664] For it *claims* to be responsive to norms. But in fact—according to the *niederträchtig* assessment—it is responsive really only to its own inclinations and attitudes. The claim is that counterfactually, if the norms determining the content of one's real commitments *were* different, but one's attitudes and inclinations were the same, one *would* act in the same way. So what should one count as sensitive to? Because norms are actually efficacious only via attitudes, it is always possible to see agents as sensitive only to their own attitudes. Construing that fact as meaning that those attitudes are not properly to be understood as acknowledgments of *commitments*, as applications of (bindings of oneself by) conceptual *norms*, is *Niederträchtigkeit*.

Second, Hegel characterizes the *niederträchtig* judge as holding to the moment of disparity that action necessarily involves, looking "at what the action is in itself," what is actually achieved, rather than what it is for the agent, "and explains it as resulting from an intention different from the action itself." It is part of the basic metaphysics of agency that one can never merely fulfill a purpose. Whatever one does admits of an indefinite number of specifications.¹

¹ "Action, in virtue of the antithesis it essentially contains, is related to a negative of consciousness, to a reality possessing intrinsic being. Contrasted with the simplicity of pure consciousness, with the absolute other or implicit

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The *niederträchtig* assessor and attributor of the doing rejects the authoritativeness of the agent's privileging of one of these (indeed, often, as we have seen, one that is not even true of what was done, but stands to those that are true only in a much weaker, retrospectively discerned, broadly anaphoric relation) as what he was trying to do. The judge exercises his own authority, attributing and holding the agent responsible for the action under a different kind of description, seeing it not as the acknowledgment of a norm but only as the evincing of an attitude of desire or inclination. By acting this way, the judge in fact adopts an asymmetrical cognitive stance toward the agent. For he insists on his own authority over action-specifications, while not acknowledging any corresponding authority on the part of the agent. And that asymmetry is the direct result of understanding authority and responsibility on the model of independence: as precluding *any* kind of reciprocal dependence (taking authority to be incompatible with any correlative responsibility).

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

manifoldness, this reality is a plurality of circumstances which breaks up and spreads out endlessly in all directions, backwards into their conditions, sideways into their connections, forwards in their consequences." [PG 642]

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

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

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

to think of things) in the case of the consciousness being assessed, why does not the same thing apply to the consciousness doing the assessing? But at this stage in the parable, the judging consciousness “is hypocrisy, because it passes off such judging, not as another manner of being wicked, but as the correct consciousness of the action.” [PG 666] The judge takes it that though the acting consciousness is evil, responding to the particular rather than the universal, the contingencies of his subjective situation and dispositions rather than acknowledging what is normatively necessary, he himself *is* responsive to the universal, to norms. What the judge says is *correct*, the *right* way to describe what is going on, the way one is *obliged* to think about it. The judge still takes it that he can “oppose to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality,” because *he* still perceives that universal aspect. So the assessor and attributor of actions applies quite different standards to his own activities than he does to those of the ones he assesses. This is an *asymmetrical* *recognitive* relation.

II. Confession

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

I confess that my judgments and actions have not been just what I was obliged or permitted (committed or entitled) to do by the norms implicit in the concepts applied therein; they were not simply responses acknowledging the normative necessity embodied in those concepts. They also express, reflect, and are sensitive to my subjective attitudes—the doxastic and practical commitments, the particular contingent course of experience I have undergone, the beliefs that I have contingently acquired and rejected or retained during this historical-experiential process of development, my contingent practical ends, projects, and plans and their evolution—everything that

makes me the distinctive individual I am. They are, in the end, *my* commitments, *my* attitudes, shot through and through with particularity that is not a mere reflection of the universals I took myself to be applying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

At this stage, the judge in the allegory does not appear as impartially applying universals, simply responding appropriately to their normative demands. What he is doing shows up as adopting a *stance*, rather than just cognitively apprehending how things objectively are. For he *decides* to adopt a *different* stance toward his own sayings and doings than he does to those of others. This is an optional attitude on his part. Further, in "rejecting any continuity with the other" he is adopting a *recognitive* stance: rejecting an offer of reciprocal recognition. That is a further kind of doing, for which he is responsible.

Hegel says:

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

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

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

What is normatively called for—in the sense that it would be the explicit acknowledgment (what things are for the judge) of what is implicitly (in itself) going on—is a reciprocal confession. That would be the judge's recognition of himself in the one who confessed. (As the Firesign Theatre puts it: “*We're all bozos on this bus.*”) For “[t]he breaking of the hard heart, and the raising of it to universality, is the same movement which was expressed in the consciousness that made confession of itself.” [PG 669] The judge's acknowledgment that his judgments, too, can be explained as resulting from contingent features of his experience, that everybody is in the same boat in this regard, would be a *sacrifice* of his particularity—his attachment to his own prior attitude of privileging himself over others in the standards of assessment he applies—that is an *identification* with and production of a symmetrical cognitive *unity* or *identity*, rather than a cognitive *disparity*.

Reciprocal confession is not yet the achievement of absolute Spirit, [PG 670] “the true, i.e. the self-conscious and existent, equalization of the two sides,” [PG 669] however, so long as what is achieved is just reciprocal *Niederträchtigkeit*. Having a whole community of knowers and agents symmetrically and even-handedly playing the moral valet to each other—reciprocally confessing the justice of assessments of the sort originally made by the hard-hearted judge—does not yet abolish alienation, but only raises it to the level of universality. For norms are still invisible. And because they are, so are attitudes as *normative* attitudes. What people are doing is not intelligible as acknowledging and attributing commitments, binding oneself and taking others to be bound by norms. So the reciprocal *niederträchtig* cognitive attitudes are not intelligible as *normative* attitudes either, but only as natural states of individuals (inclinations, dispositions),

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causally brought about by and bringing about other such states. From this point of view, the performances individuals produce cannot properly be seen as intentional doings or claims to knowledge, nor the individuals as agents or knowers, hence not really as self-conscious selves. What they are for themselves is accordingly not yet what they are in themselves.

III. Forgiveness

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

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

Edelmüttigkeit, generosity or magnanimity, the noble recognitive stance that contrasts with the mean-spiritedness or pusillanimity, *Niederträchtigkeit*, the base recognitive stance, consists in treating oneself and others in practice as adopting normative statuses, rather than just changing natural states. Achieving the kind of self-consciousness that overcomes the alienation distinctive of modernity and moves us decisively into the postmodern phase in the development of Spirit requires first realizing that in taking or treating ourselves and each other as selves, as able to make claims expressing beliefs and pursue plans expressing intentions, we are implicitly adopting *edelmüttig* recognitive attitudes. Then we have to adopt such attitudes explicitly, acknowledging those commitments as governing norms in practice. That requires more than

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

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

Forgiveness [Verzeihung] is a recognitive attitude that practically acknowledges the complementary contributions of particularity and universality to individuality—both the way the application of the universal raises the particular to the level of the individual and the way application to particulars actualizes the universal in an individual. It is a practical, community-instituting form of self-consciousness that is structured by the metaconceptual categories of *Vernunft*, rather than *Verstand*. It is *sittlich*, rather than alienated, in understanding the complex interdependence of norms (universals, on the side of content; necessity, on the side of force) and attitudes and the process by which together they institute and articulate normative statuses (commitments). It is, in short, what ushers in the form of community Hegel calls “absolute Spirit,” and the form of self-consciousness he calls “absolute knowing.” Understanding this is what the whole *Phenomenology* has been aiming at: “that one far-off divine event, toward which the whole creation moves.”

So what is forgiveness? Forgiving, like confessing, is a *speech* act, something done in *language*. It is doing something by saying something. That is why Hegel talks about it in terms of the “word of reconciliation [Versöhnung].” [PG 670] Indeed, all the recognitive relations discussed in the last part of *Spirit* are linguistic performances—from the distinctive language by which the lacerated consciousness gives utterance to its disrupted state to the warrant of sincerity and conviction that is the core of the conscientious consciousness’s claim to justification for what it does. “Here again, then, we see language as the existence of Spirit. Language is self-

consciousness existing for others.” [PG 652] That forgiveness necessarily takes a linguistic form can tempt one to suppose that it is an *easy* speech act to perform: that it consists just in *saying* “I forgive you,” uttering the word of reconciliation. But that cannot be right, given what is at stake here, the weight this concept must bear in Hegel’s project. The form of reciprocal recognition that consists of confession, forgiveness by the judge of the confessor for what is confessed, and confession on the part of the judge is the *final* form of recognition Hegel envisages. It is to be the overcoming of modern alienation, reaching *Sittlichkeit* in a higher, self-conscious form. For a form of words to accomplish that simply by being pronounced, it would have to be a *magic* formula.

If the speech act of forgiving is not to be construed in this way as the casting of a spell, what one does by producing it must be *hard*—at least in the sense that one can try to do it and fail. By way of comparison, consider the speech act of *demonstrating* that some mathematical proposition is true—that is, exhibiting or producing a *proof* of it. That is doing something (proving a claim) by saying something, but the question of whether the words produced succeed in performing the speech act in question is the topic of serious assessment. Proving something in this sense is hard, even though pronouncing the words is not. We want to know what standards of assessment are appropriate to determine whether the speech act someone performs in response to a confession succeeds in qualifying it as expressing *forgiveness* for what is confessed.

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

IV. Recollection

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

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

The wounds of the Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind. The deed is not imperishable; it is taken back by Spirit into itself, and the aspect of individuality present in it, whether as intention or as an existent negativity and limitation, straightway vanishes. [PG 669]

The invocation of mastery indicates that the forgiving that accomplishes this healing is the exercise of some sort of constitutive authority: the capacity of making something so by taking it to be so. The “wounds” are the contingent particular attitudes (“the aspect of individuality”) and the errors and failures they bring about (“existent negativity and limitation”), which are confessed. The question is what one must do in order to “cast them off and make them as if they had never happened,” to heal the wounds, “leaving no scars behind,” what the forgiving individual must do in order to count as having successfully exercised that constitutive healing authority.

I think the answer is that *forgiveness* is a kind of *recollection* (*Erinnerung*—cf. [PG 808]). What one must do in order to forgive the confessor for what is confessed is to offer a rational reconstruction of a tradition to which the concept-application (theoretically in judgment or practically in intention) in question belongs, in which it figures as an expressively progressive episode. Telling such a story is a substantive undertaking, one that the magnanimous (*edelmüttig*) would-be forgiving assessor may well not be able to accomplish. Indeed, what the assessor *confesses*, in his turn, is his subjective inability successfully to forgive everything he is committed to forgiving.

By way of a model, think of the situation of the judge at common law. The judge is charged with deciding whether a novel set of facts warrants the application of a concept, according to the norm implicit in the tradition of prior applications of it and its inferential relatives that he inherits from previous judges. What a judge who makes such a decision *confesses* is that his decision could be explained by what he had for breakfast—or, less figuratively, by attitudes of his that are extraneous to the facts at hand and the law he is applying: by features of his training, reading, or mood, by the cases he happens to have adjudicated recently, the political climate, and so on. More generally, he confesses that the *Kammerdiener* would not be wrong about him, in that his decision to apply or not to apply the universal (concept) to these particulars can be explained by appeal just to factors that are *contingent* in the sense that they are not acknowledgments of the *necessity* that is the normative force articulated by the actual content of the concept. He confesses that one need not see his decision as suitably responsive to the content of the norm he is supposed to supply, which is what would *justify* the decision. For one can instead see it as *caused* by various extraneous circumstances. The decision is infected with “the aspect of individuality.” For collateral attitudes that just *happen* to be acknowledgments of commitments by the same individual affect his decision as to whether to apply the concept in each new case. In making such a confession the judge need not admit (and for the confession to be in order it need not be true) that he was not in the new case *trying* or *intending correctly* to apply the norm (universal, concept) he inherited. Rather, what is confessed is that the result of doing that expressed what the content of the concept was *for him*, rather than just what it was *in itself*, an appearance to him of the reality, rather than the reality itself. What drives a wedge between the two is precisely that his decisions are always in part responsive to contingencies of his particular subjective attitudes, circumstances, and prior experience. It follows that the confession is also an acknowledgment of the necessity and ubiquity of the distinction that consciousness and action involve, the “negativity” that shows up when one finds oneself with incompatible commitments, an acknowledgment that concept application necessarily has the shape of the experience of error and failure (“limitation”).

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

recharacterizing and re[presenting] the content of the concept (what it really is, what it is in itself) as gradually emerging into the daylight of explicitness through a sequence of applications of it to novel cases, each of which reveals some hitherto hidden feature of it, and exhibiting the forgiven judge's decision as having played that role. From the point of view of such a reconstructive recollection, though the decision might have been caused by contingent subjective attitudes and justificatorily irrelevant circumstances, *what* was so caused was an application that was both correct and expressively progressive. That is, it was just what was needed for us to find out more about the real content of the concept. The experience of incompatibility is exhibited in its capacity as the engine of conceptual, cognitive, and practical *progress*, rather than in its capacity as the mark of error and failure. Forgiving is the recollective labor of finding a concept that is being expressed (now less, now more fully and faithfully) by the conceptions endorsed by those whose judgments and actions are being forgiven.

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

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

What is “surrendered” or “set aside” is *sacrificed*. What the one who confesses gives up is his “particular being for self,” his “actual existence.” That is to say that he ceases to assert the authority of his actual attitudes, acknowledging that he has bound himself by an objective

Commented [m13]: AU: correct that the meaning is “presenting again”?

Commented [m14R13]: Yes. But I also mean to mark the affinity with representing. It needs the hyphen.

conceptual norm that differs from his subjective conception of it. For that authority was not recognized or acknowledged. What the judge relinquishes is his insistence on the authority of his hard-hearted assessment, which, as a one-sided assertion of disparity was also not reciprocally acknowledged. Sacrificing the authority of these one-sided, subjective attitudes—what things are for one—is identifying with what one has sacrificed for: what things are in themselves, the content that unifies the disparate forms in which it was expressed (showed up for individual consciousnesses). Both sides acknowledge that what recollectively shows up as what was really being talked or thought about (the objective concept) has authority over their attitudes and applications of the concept (subjective conceptions). Unlike the attitudes that each sacrifices, *this authority is acknowledged by both*. Recognition as confession and forgiveness is reciprocal.

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

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

Forgiveness is a “renunciation” of the previous identification of the hard-hearted judge with the disparity between his “subjectively determined judgment” and the “determinate thought—that is, of the distinction between what things are for the judge and what they are in themselves, the subjective conception or attitude and the objective concept or thought. Through forgiveness—the “word of reconciliation,” which is not just *saying* that the other is forgiven, but actually going through the recollective labor of *making* it so—the judge brings about the unity that he identifies with. On the cognitive and practical dimensions of activity it is the unity of actual particularity (the causally explicable and efficacious attitudes and behavior of subjects) and universal essence (the conceptual norms whose application in attitude and act institute normative statuses) visible when what is said and done by subjects is understood as applying, binding themselves by, making themselves responsible to determinately contentful concepts or conceptual norms. On the cognitive dimension, it is the unity of particular, acting subjects and the normative community they synthesize by reciprocal recognition. Explaining forgiveness as recollection displays the fine structure underlying the general claim that recognition serves both as the *model* of and as the *context* within which the application of conceptual universals to actual particulars is to be understood.

We can be sure on general grounds that the kind of recognition that moves us beyond alienation must be reciprocal and symmetrical. Recollection, however, is at base an asymmetrical relation, because it incorporates a temporal relation in which the recollecting comes essentially *later* than what is recollected. Just so, forgiveness is essentially a *later* phase in a sequence. In the parable, that is the sequence: crime, confession, forgiveness. Indeed, lining up these temporal-developmental dimensions is one of the motors of the reading of forgiveness as expressively progressive recollective reconstrual of the content of conceptual norms. So: whence the symmetry?

Even though the recollecting event of forgiving must, in the paradigmatic case, come later than the recollected event forgiven, forgiving as a cognitive relation between *agents* could still be symmetrical and reciprocal. You and I might simultaneously forgive each other’s earlier confessed transgressions. As William Blake has it: “Through all eternity, / I forgive you, and you forgive me.” But recognition need not be *synchronic* in order to be *symmetrical*. A conceptual

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

The reciprocal cognitive structure of confession and forgiveness is of this diachronic, historical type. When concept users have fully achieved the sort of semantic self-consciousness that Hegel gives us the metaconcepts for (the philosophical categories of *Vernunft*), we will each confess that our applications of concepts and assessments of such applications are no doubt influenced by contingencies of our collateral subjective attitudes and stray causal factors of which we are not aware or not in intentional control. (“No doubt,” “not aware,” and “not in . . . control” because any specific such influences of which we are aware and have control over we are obliged to take account of, altering our particular applications of concepts in belief and intention accordingly.) And we will each acknowledge our (*edelmütig*) commitment to find ways

concretely and specifically to forgive in the judgments and actions of others what first shows up as the confessed disparity between what things are for those concept-users and what they are in themselves—ways to display their applications of concepts as precedential. This is acknowledging commitment to a new *kind* of recognition of others. And we will also confess that this cognitive commitment, too, exhibits the disparity that consciousness and action involve: the disparity between what we are committed to do and what we actually do. That is, we confess that we have not succeeded in fulfilling this cognitive commitment. We are not capable of retrospectively bringing about the total unity of norm and actual performance in each case we are committed to forgive. Our recollective reconstrual of the contents of the concepts involved inevitably fails to exhibit every use as correct and expressively progressive. We confess that though our generous, forgiving recollective cognitive spirit is willing, our flesh is weak. We have not fully healed the wounds of the Spirit, have not made the aspect of particularity present in every actuality wholly vanish, have not made the disparity of all the deeds as if it had never happened.

Those confessions, both of residual ground-level disparity of norm and actual attitude and of the higher-level cognitive failures adequately and completely concretely to forgive the confessed failures of others are themselves petitions for recognition in the form of forgiveness. The focus of the parable of the hard-hearted judge and the breaking of his hard heart, with which Hegel closes *Spirit*, is the normative expectation, on the part of the one who confesses, of forgiveness from those who judge him. Confession is not just a *petition* for recognition as forgiveness, it is the assertion of a *right* to recognition through forgiveness. It creates a *responsibility* to treat the one who confesses generously, and not meanly, not to play the moral valet. This is the responsibility to reciprocate recognition. By using *forgiveness* as the axis around which revolves the parable he uses to introduce the final form of reciprocal recognition, Hegel is intentionally invoking the central concept of Christianity, and depending on its epitome in the petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass before us."²

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

V. Trust and Magnanimous Agency

Confession and forgiveness are both at base performances that express backward-looking attitudes. Hegel's telling of his parable of recognition does not include an explicit term for the forward-looking attitude that is the recognitive *petition* for forgiveness, with its attendant institution of a corresponding recognitive *obligation* to forgive on the part of those to whom it is addressed. I use the term "trust" for that purpose. In confessing, one not only expresses retrospective acknowledgment of the residual disparity in one's beliefs and actions between what things are in themselves and what they are for one, between norm and subjective attitude; one also expresses prospective trust in others to find ways of forgiving that disparity, forging / finding a unity of referent behind the disparity of sense, healing the wound. Such trust is an acknowledgment of dependence on others for recognition in the form of forgiveness.

"Dependence" here is used in Hegel's normative sense. What is acknowledged is the recognitive *authority* of those on whom one depends for forgiveness. And *what* depends on the forgiveness of those to whom one has confessed is just the authority of one's own concept applications (about which one confessed)—just as is the case with the precedential authority of an earlier judge's adjudications in the legal case that is our model. Trusting is both acknowledging the authority of those trusted to forgive and invoking their responsibility to do so. Prospective trust that one will be forgiven for what one confesses is the recognitive attitude complementary to forgiveness. Together these reciprocal practical attitudes produce a community with a symmetrical, *edelmüsig* recognitive structure. The choice of the term "trust" is motivated by Hegel's use of it [Vertrauen / vertrauen] to describe what was progressive about Faith, in spite of the cognitive errors for which it stands condemned by Enlightenment: the reciprocal recognitive structure of the religious community.

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

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

With this, we already have before us the Notion of *Spirit*. What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what *Spirit* is—this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: “I” that is “We” and “We” that is “I.” [PG 177]

The kind of individual self-consciousness and community recognitively synthesized by prospective trust and recollective forgiveness are an “I” and a “we” that are identical in Hegel’s holistic, “speculative” sense: distinct, but mutually presupposing elements whose relations articulate a larger unity, and which are unintelligible apart from the role they play in that whole. This new sort of cognitive structure is unalienated, *sittlich*, in virtue of the division of normative labor it exhibits between the “I” and the “we.” The mistake characteristic of modernity was the practical conviction that justice could be done to the essential contribution of the actual activities and subjective attitudes of individuals to the institution of normative statuses—their authority over what they are responsible for—only if those individuals are conceived of as wholly *independent*: as fully and solely authoritative, as *constitutively* authoritative. Within the confines enforced by the atomistic metaconceptual categories of *Verstand*, the sense in which what I believe and do is up to me could be acknowledged only by identifying practically just with whatever is *entirely* up to me. For independence (authority) is so understood as to be incompatible with any and every sort of dependence (corresponding responsibility).

We have followed Hegel’s rehearsal, in the body of the *Phenomenology*, of how the logic of the modern form of this defective practical and theoretical conception of the normative statuses of authority and responsibility requires a *contraction strategy* culminating in the self-conceptions and conceptions of agency epitomized by the honest consciousness and the conscientious consciousness. The only doings for which the former takes responsibility are pure acts of will: what it *tries* to do. For these are the only ones over which it has total authority—the only things it cannot try to do and fail. By contrast, forgiveness and trust embody an *expansion strategy*, by which self-conscious individuals identify with actual goings-on over which they exert some real, but always only partial authority, identify themselves as the seats of responsibilities that outrun their own capacity to fulfill. Confession of the need for forgiveness and trust that it will be

Commented [m15]: AU: Italicize? Chap. 9 has “the Notion of *Spirit*”

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forthcoming both acknowledge the sense in which *others* are in a distinctive way also *responsible* for what *I* have done. For the eventual significance of my performance, the content of the commitment I have adopted, practically as intention or cognitively as belief, is now left in their care. In one sense, I as agent am responsible for what are in the ordinary sense *my* doings. For it is my adoption of an attitude, my endorsement of a purpose (*Vorsatz*) that opens the process that proceeds and develops therefrom to normative assessment in the first place. I must play the counter in the game for a move to have been made. But then, in another sense—visible from the point of view of *Vernunft* as a *complementary* sense—my fellow community members, those whom I recognize in the sense of trusting them to forgive my performance, are responsible for finding a way to make it have been a *successful* application of the concept expressed by the counter I played. That is, they are responsible for the imputation of an intention (*Absicht*) that can be seen retrospectively as having been carried out as the sequence of consequential specifications of the doing unfolds. That intention sets the normative standard for the success of the action and, as the content expressed by the purpose that is the actually efficacious attitude, is construed as guiding the process that is the execution of the plan. Concretely forgiving the action is finding a way to reconstrue the content of the concept applied in the *Vorsatz* so that the resulting *Absicht* turns out to be successful.

So the explicit acknowledgment of this sharing of responsibility for what is done between the confessing and trusting agent and the forgiving community expresses an expanded practical conception of how *happenings* qualify as *doings*. The unity of actions (what defines their identity) that both the agent who trusts and the community that forgives identify with and produce by adopting these reciprocal recognitive stances (relinquishing claims to merely particular subjective authority not balanced by a correlative responsibility) is a complex, internally articulated unity that comprises both aspects of the disparity that action involves. For it combines as essential, mutually presupposing aspects the action as something that qualifies as such only because it has both specifications under which it is intentional and consequential specifications in terms of actual effects that unroll unforeseeably to the infinite horizon. Both the prospective exercise of authority by the agent and the retrospective exercise of authority by the forgiving community are required to bring about this unity: to make what *happens* into something *done*.

The consequential specifications of a doing are not something simply *given*, available only for theoretical reinterpretation. Concrete practical forgiveness involves *doing* things to *change* what the consequences of the act turn out to be. For example, one might trust one's successors to *make* it the case that one's inadvertent revelation, one's sacrifice, or the decision to go to war was worthwhile, because of what it eventually led to—because of what *we* made of it by doing things differently afterward. Something I have done should not be treated as an error or a crime, as the hard-hearted *niederträchtig* judge does, because it is not yet settled *what* I have done. Subsequent actions by others can affect its consequences, and hence the content of what I have done. The hard-hearted judgment wrongly assumes that the action is a finished thing, sitting there fully formed, as a possible object of assessment independent of what is done later. The *Kammerdiener*'s minifying ascription of the hero's action to low, self-interested motives rather than acknowledgment of a norm as binding in the situation depends on a defective atomistic conception of what an intention is. Recall the model of agency discussed in connection with the *Reason* section. Whether any particular event that occurs consequentially downstream from the adoption of a practical attitude (*Vorsatz*) makes an expressively progressive contribution to the fulfillment of an intention depends on its role in the development of a retrospectively imputed plan. And the role of a given event in the evolving plan depends on *what else happens*.

The significance of one event is never fully and finally settled. It is always open to influence by later events. The magnanimous commitment to concrete practical forgiveness is a commitment to act so as to *make* the act forgiven *have been* correct as the acknowledgment of the norm that can now be imputed as the content of the governing intention. In a community with the cognitive structure of trust and forgiveness, there is a real sense in which everything is done by everyone. For everyone takes responsibility for what each one does, and each takes responsibility for what everyone does. This is what I meant by talking about an “expansion strategy” for *edelmüttig* self-consciousness, by contrast to the “contraction strategy” of alienated self-consciousness. The conception of the agent in the sense of the doer who is responsible for what is done is expanded so that the self-conscious individual is just one element in a larger constellation including those he recognizes through trust and who recognize him through forgiveness.

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. [PG 669]

In the sphere of agency, the modern rise of subjectivity takes the form of the assertion of what Hegel calls the “rights of intention and knowledge.” These are the rights of the individual self-consciousness to be held responsible for what it does only under the specifications under which it was intentional, together with consequential specifications it could foresee. This modern notion of agency contrasted with the heroic conception of agency characteristic of traditional, premodern practical self-consciousness. On that conception, the individual agent was responsible for what is done under all of its specifications, whether intended or envisaged or not. (“I do what happens.”) As we have seen, Hegel’s emblematic example is Oedipus, who is held responsible (and holds himself responsible) for committing the crimes of killing his father and marrying his mother, in spite of not having intended to do anything under those descriptions, and having no way of knowing that what he intended under other descriptions would have those consequences. Those facts do not excuse or exculpate him. They merely illustrate the *tragic* character of *heroically* taking responsibility for what one does in this extensive sense: that we do not and cannot know what we are doing, that any action opens us up to the vagaries of fate. (“The stone belongs to the devil when it leaves the hand that threw it.”)

Hegel is clear that modernity’s acknowledgment of the rights of intention and knowledge is expressively progressive. But by itself it leaves us alienated from our doings, unable satisfactorily to unify the various aspects of agency: the normative and the actual, the intentional and the consequential. Working within the categories of independence, of *Verstand*, the modern view can attribute genuine responsibility only where the authority of the agent is complete. The result is the contraction strategy, where our doings are contracted to mere willings. What was lost is what the heroic conception of agency had right: the kind of responsibility that extends to our doings under *all* their specifications, including consequential ones that were not explicitly envisaged or endorsed. The normative status one enters into by acting—what the agent makes herself responsible for, what she has committed herself to—outruns the subjective attitude in virtue of which it is her doing. The traditional view is wrong in not acknowledging the sense in

which the agent's responsibility is limited by the rights of intention and knowledge. The modern view is wrong in thinking that there is no responsibility for what was not part of the individual's purpose or knowledge. The cognitive structure of trust and forgiveness, in virtue of its division of normative labor, its sharing of responsibility between agent and community, incorporates versions of both the individual rights of intention and knowledge characteristic of modernity and the heroic conception of agency characteristic of traditional society. The agent and the community together are responsible for the action under all its specifications. The rights of intention and knowledge mark the sense in which the doing is the agent's doing, expressing the fact that it is the attitudes of individual agents that are the source of actualizing any norm, adopting any normative status. But what the agent has done—the content of the status entered into—is not understood as restricted by what is explicit in those attitudes.

This third, post-modern normative structure would just be the traditional heroic conception of agency, except that the fact that what the agent has done is understood not just as having made *her* responsible for the doing, but as having made us *all* responsible for it (has imposed a responsibility concretely and practically to forgive it) means that the achievement of the heroic conception now takes a higher form. That higher form does not essentially involve the tragedy that is a confrontation with an alien destiny. Though the agent cannot know what she does, others are committed to and responsible for its not turning out to be a crime. She trusts that they will forgive, will exercise their power to heal the wounds of the Spirit inflicted by the stubborn recalcitrance of cause, contingency, actuality, immediacy, and particularity, by giving it the form of the conceptual, necessity, normativity, mediation, and universality. Heroism is the genuine bindingness of norms on actuality: the agent's being genuinely (but not wholly independently) authoritative over and responsible for what actually happens. The sharing of responsibility between the confessing and trusting knower-and-agent and forgiving and confessing assessors of claims and deeds, which articulates the historical-perspectival (prospective / retrospective) division of normative labor within the magnanimous cognitive community, is what makes subjective attitudes intelligible as the application (binding of oneself by) objective norms, and so as the institution of normative statuses (cognitive and practical commitments) whose contents outrun the subjective conceptions of any of the participants. Through his adoption of attitudes, the application of concepts, hence the acknowledgment of objectively determinately contentful

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conceptual norms as governing the assessment of the resulting performances, the agent both exercises real (though incomplete) authority over what happens and makes herself (though not herself alone) responsible for what actually happens, under all its specifications, consequential as well as intentional. The magnanimous sharing of responsibility that is the execution of the expansion strategy is what makes possible *heroism* (what no man is to his valet) without *tragedy*.

End