

November 29, 2017

Week 12 Notes: AK & Preface

1. Recap:

- a) Normative meta-attitudes of Edelmütigkeit and Niederträchtigkeit.
The *committed normativist* hero and the *reductive naturalist* Kammerdiener.
The normativist acknowledges normative *statuses* as well as normative *attitudes*. The reductive naturalist acknowledges only normative *attitudes*.
- b) Four meta- normative meta-attitudes (about the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses):

1) The first, *objectivist*, way of understanding the relation between the *edelmütig* normativist and the *niederträchtig* naturalist is as a *cognitive* disagreement about a matter of *objective fact*. They disagree about the correct answer to the question: Are there norms, or not?

2) The second is an almost diametrically opposed *subjectivist* meta-meta-attitude. According to this way of thinking, the normativist and the naturalist employ different vocabularies in describing the world. Using one rather than the other is adopting a *stance*. The two stances are incompatible; one cannot adopt them both. One either uses normative vocabulary or one does not. But both of them are available, and both of them are legitimate.

As for the legitimacy of the reductive, *niederträchtig* attitude, Hegel acknowledges that the Kammerdiener is *not wrong*. **“No action can escape such judgement,”**

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

Every intentional action is “charged with the aspect of particularity,” in that the agent must have had some motive for performing it, some attitude that was efficacious in bringing it about. Norms are efficacious only through attitudes towards them.

Just so, **“every action is capable of being looked at from the point of view of conformity to duty,”** that is, in the *edelmütig* normative vocabulary. What shows up in the causal-psychological vocabulary of the Kammerdiener is nature, natural beings, and natural processes: the world of desire. What shows up in the normative vocabulary of the hero is Spirit, *geistig* beings, and discursive practices: the world of recognition.

(1) and (2) are purely *cognitive* meta-meta-attitudes.

3) The third construal of the *niederträchtig* and *edelmütig* meta-attitudes toward norms and normative attitudes is that they are ***recognitive rather than cognitive attitudes***, which have the effect of *practical commitments*. Adopting the *niederträchtig* meta-attitude not only “holds fast” to the “disparity of the action with itself,” but “divides up the action” and “*produces*” the disparity. Normativity and

rationality are *products* of our edelmütig meta-attitudes, of our practically taking or treating what we are doing (recognizing each other) as acknowledging rational commitments. Spirit exists insofar as we *make* it exist by *taking* it to exist: by understanding what we are doing in normative, rational terms.

This third understanding of the meta-attitudes of Niederträchtigkeit and Edelmütigkeit, as practical, cognitive, hence community- and self-constitutive, like the second, still presents them as **options available for the subject freely to choose between**. It is up to us whether to make ourselves into merely natural or genuinely normative beings.

4) A fourth way of understanding the status of these two stances is that **we have always already implicitly committed ourselves to adopting the edelmütig stance**, to identifying with the unity that action and consciousness involve, to understanding ourselves as genuinely binding ourselves by conceptual norms that we apply in acting intentionally and making judgments.

2. The topic of the *Spirit* chapter is the development of ways of understanding the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses.

- a. The way of understanding their relations that Hegel calls “**Moralität**” sees genuine statuses as instituted by individual attitudes: one *makes* oneself be committed when one *takes* oneself to be committed, binds oneself by a norm that binds just insofar as one acknowledges it *as* binding. This is progressive in two ways:
 - i. Normative statuses are attitude-dependent.
 - ii. *Self-binding* is what institutes genuinely normative constraint.
- b. Moralität also appreciates that for a *norm* (status) genuinely to be in force, it must hold *both* for the context of *deliberation* and for the context of *assessment*. Deliberation concerns one’s *own* actions, and assessments concern the actions of *others*. These are *attitudes*, and the norm is what holds them together, not just as their common *content*, but as what *rationally justifies* those attitudes, hence as the source of their normative *force*. Moralität satisfies this criterion of adequacy for putting genuine norms in force because each agent uses the *same* rules he imposes on himself to assess the propriety of the doings of *others*, that is, in assessing their performance. After all, in the Kantian paradigm of Moralität, one acknowledges rules as *universal laws* (one version of the categorical imperative).
 - iii. Acknowledging and aspiring to satisfy the criterion of adequacy for the imposition of norms—that the *same* norm must be taken to govern the contexts of deliberation and of assessment—is also progressive.

3. Moralität fails to get things quite right along all these dimensions, however.

- a) As to (i), the attitudes that *really* institute normative statuses are not those of an individual, but those of an entire cognitive community.
- b) As to (ii), the *self-binding* that institutes normative statuses requires the distinct contributions of each individual and of the whole community. In the first instance, it is the community that is the self that binds itself by a norm. The fine structure of its doing

so requires contributions from each recognized and recognizing individual community member.

- c) The *argument* that Moralität is not an adequate meta-conception of the relations between normative attitudes and normative statuses, and the pointer to a more adequate conception, concerns the final criterion of adequacy. It is not enough to put a genuine norm in place that *each individual agent* appeal to the same rules (duties, commitments, norms as normative statuses) in his or her *own* deliberations and assessments. For the one who is assessed might acknowledge and endorse *different* norms in her deliberations and assessments. Then she is being held to an *alien* standard, one she does *not* endorse, one she does *not*, in her attitudes, acknowledge as one she has *bound herself by*. This collides with the insight that the attitude-dependence of normative statuses should be understood according to the principle that one is genuinely *normatively* bound only by rules one has *acknowledged as* binding on one, by one's own attitudes.
- d) This is the conflict that is allegorically played out in confrontation between the “evil consciousness” and the “hard-hearted judge.”

4.

Confession, Forgiveness, and Trust: The Final Form of Reciprocal Recognition

Understanding the edelmütig attitude as a practical-recognitive commitment that has always already implicitly been undertaken as a pragmatic condition of semantically contentful cognition and agency (of determinate subjective attitudes) then corresponds to breaking through the confines of alienated modernity into the form of self-consciousness Hegel calls “Absolute Knowing”.

At the first stage, in which necessity is construed as objective necessity, the norms are *found*. For normative statuses (duty, propriety, what one is committed to do, what one is responsible for doing) reflect and are determined by objective (attitude- and practice-independent) norms.

In the middle, modern stage, in which necessity is construed as subjective necessity, normativity and reason must be *made* by our attitudes and practices, rather than being found.

At the projected post-modern third stage, finding and making show up as two sides of one coin, two aspects of one process, whose two phases—experience and its recollection, lived forward and comprehended backward, the inhalation and exhalation that sustain the life of Spirit—are each both makings and findings. In experience, error is found and a new phenomenon is made. In recollection, a rational selection and reconstruction of an expressively progressive trajectory of experience is made, and an implicit noumenon is found. Senses are made, and referents found. The unity, the identity of content, that consciousness and action involve must be made, and the complementary disparity is found. Absolute Knowing is comprehending the way in

which these aspects mutually presuppose, support, complement, and complete one another. (165)

The final movement of *Spirit* is discussed in the concluding eleven paragraphs of the long *Spirit* chapter. 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 669-70]: evil [PG 661-62], judgment [PG 662-66], confession [666], refusal of reciprocal confession [PG 667-68], the breaking of the hard heart and confession by the judge [PG 669], forgiveness [PG 669-71], 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, as it has so often been, 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. (167)

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 agency familiar to us from our consideration of Hegel’s theory of agency. **These are the first-person context of deliberation (Vorsatz-Handlung) and the third-person context of assessment (Absicht-Tat). The one judged makes himself responsible, by applying a concept, and the judge holds him responsible for that application.** What we are eventually to comprehend—thereby achieving “absolute knowing”—is the way in which a process of negotiation involving the normative attitudes of the self-conscious individuals occupying the two perspectives is intelligible as instituting a normative status: a cognitive or practical commitment resulting from the application of a conceptual norm whose determinate content is expressed, clarified, and developed in that very process.

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]

“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 correct or required.

Now the judging consciousness does not stop short at the former aspect of duty, at the doer’s knowledge of it that this is his duty, and the fact that the doer knows it to be his duty, the condition and status of his reality. On the contrary, it holds to the other aspect, looks at what the action is in itself, and explains it as resulting from an intention different

from the action itself, and from selfish motives. **Just as every action is capable of being looked at from the point of view of conformity to duty, so too can it be considered from the point of view of the particularity [of the doer]...No action can escape such judgement, for duty for duty's sake, this pure purpose, is an unreality; it becomes a reality in the deed of an individuality, and the action is thereby charged with the aspect of particularity....** Thus, for the judging consciousness, there is no action in which it could not oppose to the universal aspect of the action, the personal aspect of the individuality, and **play the part of the moral valet towards the agent.** [PG 665]

As Hegel tells the story, the acting consciousness, which “declares its specific action to be duty,” and both the judging and confessing consciousness, which explain actions in terms of non-normatively 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.**

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 *asymmetric* *recognitive* relation.

The first step toward a symmetric, 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: “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.” One always does both more and less than just what one *ought* to do.

Making such a confession is a *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, symmetric 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 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 towards his own sayings and doings than he does to those of others.

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. [667]

The hard-hearted judge is doing what he originally indicted the other for. He is letting particularity affect his application of universals: applying different normative standards to doings just because they happen to be *his* doings. And in doing so, he is *producing* a 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]

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

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

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

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

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

Forgiveness [Verzeihung] is a cognitive 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 meta-conceptual 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).

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].

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, PG 29]—note that the term is used in crucial passages in *both* of the bracketing sections: *Absolute Knowing* and the *Preface*). What one must do in order to forgive the confessor for what is confessed is to offer a rational reconstruction of a tradition to which the concept-application (theoretically in judgment or practically in intention) in question belongs, in which it figures as an expressively progressive episode. Telling such a story is a substantive undertaking, one that the magnanimous (edelmütig) would-be forgiving assessor may well not be able to accomplish. Indeed, what the assessor *confesses*, in his turn, is his subjective inability successfully to forgive everything he is committed to forgiving.

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 Begriff¹]. [PG 669]

What is “surrendered” or “set aside” is *sacrificed*. What the one who confesses gives up is his “particular being for self,” his “actual existence.” That is to say that he ceases to assert the authority of his actual attitudes, acknowledging that he has bound himself by an objective conceptual norm that differs from his subjective conception of it. For that authority was not recognized or acknowledged [nicht anerkanntes]. 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.

¹ I have altered the translation here. Miller has: “over its specific Notion of *itself*” [emphasis added], reading “its concept” (or “his concept”), “seinem (bestimmten) Begriff,” as a concept of the forgiving judge in the sense of having him as its object, rather than its subject—that is, as an objective, rather than a subjective genitive.

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 [fürsichseiendes bestimmendes Urteil]” and the “determinate thought [bestimmten Gedanken]”—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 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 made in Chapter Two 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.

Forgiveness is the process by which immediacy is mediated, by which the stubborn recalcitrance of reality is given conceptual shape, acknowledged in what things are for consciousness. The semantic holism consequent upon understanding conceptual content in the first place in terms of relations of material incompatibility (determinate negation), and hence material inference (mediation) among such contents means that getting one determinate concept right requires getting them all right. And the interdependence of what follows from and is incompatible with what, on the one hand, and what we take to be *true*, how we take things to be, in themselves, on the other, means that rectifying our concepts and rectifying our beliefs and judgments are complementary aspects of one enterprise, neither completable apart from the other. In the conceptual setting provided by those overarching semantic commitments, the inexhaustibility of

immediacy entails the ultimate instability of any set of *Verstand*-determinate empirically-and-practically contentful concepts. No matter how much we have studied the matter, there will *always* be a course of possible experience that would result in someone's being in the same position with respect to our concept of hands that we are with respect to Aristotle's or Moore's. But the notion of there being a way things determinately are, in themselves—that is independently of what they are for us, indeed, in which how things are for us is on the contrary dependent on how they are in themselves, in the sense that the latter is authoritative for, sets normative standards for, the former—is, Hegel thinks, an essential element of the concept of theoretical and practical consciousness. Apart from the idea that our conceptually articulated attitudes are *about* something in the normative sense of having made ourselves responsible *to* it, that it settles what we have made ourselves responsible *for*, the actual content of the normative status we have undertaken, what we have bound ourselves by, we cannot make the concepts of consciousness and action intelligible. **Any adequate account of the determinate contentfulness of thought must make sense of the realistic, representational dimension of intentionality.** The two-phase model of finding referents retrospectively, within each recollective story, and making new senses prospectively by coming up with such stories in response to the felt and acknowledged inadequacy of the previous ones, is Hegel's account of how these two demands on the notion of determinate conceptual content can both be satisfied. The *Verstand* conception of determinate conceptual contentfulness is important, and it is right as far as it goes. But it is one-sided and incomplete, leaving out elements of the larger context that are essential to its intelligibility.

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 recognitive 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 the Musketeer form of agency: “All for one and one for all.”) This is what I meant by talking about an “expansion strategy” for edelmütig 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 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...** [PG 669]

Much more central to Hegel's project, however, is fulfilling this obligation of generous recollection to his specifically philosophical predecessors. The *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* culminates in what he insists is not *his* system but *the* system of philosophy that he expounds in the *Science of Logic*, and applies in the *Encyclopedia*. Each prior figure is presented from the point of view of what he understood, what his thought can retrospectively be seen to have revealed about how things actually are, which aspects of the philosophical concepts that articulate his current, adequate self-consciousness are expressed, however darkly, in his conceptions, and how the expressive inadequacies of those views can be seen to have served the progressive purpose of being necessary preconditions of the next stage, providing the experience of error and failure out of which a newer, better conception arises. As Hegel says in the conclusion of his three volumes:

At this point I bring this history of Philosophy to a close. It has been my desire that you should learn from it that the history of philosophy is not a blind collection of fanciful ideas, nor a fortuitous progression. I have rather sought to show the necessary development of the successive philosophies from one another, so that the one of necessity presupposes another preceding it. The general result of the history of Philosophy is this: in the first place, that throughout all time there has been only one Philosophy, the contemporary differences of which constitute the necessary aspects of one principle; in the second place, that the succession of philosophic systems is not due to chance, but represents the necessary succession of stages in the development of this science; in the third place, that the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit affords of itself. The latest philosophy contains therefore those which went before; it embraces in itself all the different stages thereof; it is the product and the result of those that preceded it....It is my desire that this history of Philosophy should contain for you a summons to grasp the spirit of the time, which is present in us by nature, and—each in his own place—consciously to bring it from its natural condition, i.e. from its lifeless seclusion, into the light of day.²

The aspiration is to offer a rational history: a reconstruction in which each element makes an essential contribution to what is finally revealed as having been all along implicitly the topic. The progression is *retrospectively* necessary. It is not the case that a given stage could have evolved in no other way than as to produce what appears as its successor. Rather, that successor (and ultimately, the final—so far—triumphant, culminating conception) could not have arisen except as a development from the earlier ones.

Practicing the recognitive hermeneutics of magnanimity is not just one option among others. A proper understanding of the kind of creatures we are obliges us to be forgiving and trusting: to

² *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (trans.) [New Jersey: Humanities Press 1983] volume 3, pp. 552-53.

see the world through rational eyes, not only because the world then looks rationally back, but because that rational world is the only mirror in which we can see ourselves.

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, and therein remains identical with itself, and, in its complete externalization and opposite, possesses the certainty of itself: it is God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge. [PG 671]

5. ***Absolute Knowing:***

We are to understand these passages in terms of the *process of experience*. It has two aspects or phases:

- a) The first we now understand not only as the *experience of error*, as in the *Introduction*, but as the full *cycle of perception, thought, and action* (followed by perception of the result of the action, initiating a new cycle).
- b) The second is the process of *recollection*, retrospectively rationally reconstructing that experience in an expressively progressive way, making it visible as the gradual, inexorable emergence into explicitness of what shows up as having been all along implicit. This is at once the reality responsible for its appearances and the *Absicht* implicit in the *Tat*.
- c) What emerges from this recollection is both in one sense the *product* of the two-phase process (prospective and retrospective, lived forward and understood backward), present only at the (always provisional) *end* of the process, and in another sense is revealed as the *presupposition* of the process, present already at the *beginning* of the process.

It is in the one sense *made* and in the other *found*.

It is the *in-itself* whose process of becoming *for consciousness* is experience with recollection. What emerges from this process after each two-stage cycle of experience and recollection is both what the objective world is *in itself* and what the subjective self is *in itself*. The revelation of the one is always also the revelation of the other.

It is the determination of subjective conceptual contents as the revelation of what *really* follows from what and is incompatible with what.

That determination (a making that is a finding) of conceptual contents incorporates contingent immediacy in the necessary (normative) universal conceptual (thoroughly mediated) form.

[798] the Notion [*Begriff*], has become the element of existence, or has become the *form of objectivity* for consciousness.

[799] **The content is...**the very **movement** just spoken of; for **the content is Spirit that traverses its own self** and does so *for itself* as Spirit by the fact that it has the 'shape' of the Notion in its objectivity.

[802] For *experience* is just this, that the **content**—which is *Spirit*—is in **itself substance**, and therefore an *object of consciousness*. But this substance which is Spirit is the **process** in which Spirit becomes what it is in itself; and it is only as this process of reflecting itself into itself that it is in itself truly Spirit. It is in itself the **movement** which is cognition—**the transforming of that in-itself into that which is for itself**, of **Substance into Subject**, of **the object of consciousness into** an object of self-consciousness, i.e. into an object that is just as much superseded, or into **the Notion**.

[804] Spirit, however, has shown itself to us to be neither merely the *withdrawal* of self-consciousness into its pure inwardness, nor the mere *submergence* of self-consciousness into substance...but Spirit is this **movement** of the Self which empties itself of itself and sinks itself into its substance, and also, as Subject, has gone out of that substance into itself, **making the substance into an object and a content at the same time as it cancels this difference between objectivity and content**.

[804] The 'I' [does not have] to cling to itself in the form of self-consciousness as **against the form of substantiality and objectivity**, as if it were afraid of the externalization of itself: **the power of Spirit lies rather in remaining the selfsame Spirit in its externalization** and, as that which is both in itself and for itself, in making its being-for-self no less merely a moment than its in-itself.

[805] In this knowing, then, Spirit has concluded the movement in which it has shaped itself, in so far as this shaping was burdened with **the difference of consciousness** [i.e. of the latter from its object], a difference now overcome. The **content**, in accordance with the **freedom** of its being, is the self-alienating Self, or the immediate unity of self-knowledge. **The pure movement of this alienation, considered in connection with the content, constitutes the necessity of the content. The distinct content, as determinate, is in relation, is not 'in itself'; it is its own restless process of superseding itself, or negativity; therefore, negativity or diversity, like free being, is also the Self; and in this self-like form in which existence is immediately thought, the content is the Notion.**

[805] **the form of the Notion...unites the objective form of Truth and of the knowing Self in an immediate unity. ...[T]he pure Notion and its onward movement, depends solely on its pure determinateness.**

[807] Yet this externalization is still incomplete; it expresses the connection of its self-certainty with the object which, just because it is thus connected, has not yet won its complete freedom. The self-knowing Spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself, or its limit: **to know one's limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself**. This **sacrifice** is the externalization in which **Spirit displays the process of its becoming Spirit in the form of free contingent happening**, intuiting its pure Self as Time outside of it, and equally its Being as Space. This last becoming of Spirit, Nature, is its living immediate Becoming; **Nature, the externalized Spirit, is in its**

existence nothing but this eternal externalization of its continuing existence and **the movement which reinstates the Subject**.

[808] History, is a conscious, self-mediating process—Spirit emptied out into Time. 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.

the new existence, a new world and a new shape of Spirit...

[R]ecollection, 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.

6. The Preface:

...everything turns on grasping and expressing the True not only as Substance, but equally as Subject. At the same time it is to be observed that substantiality embraces the universal, or the immediacy of knowledge itself, as well as that which is being or immediacy for knowledge. [17] [BB: Cf. [18], [25], [32], [37], [39], [54], and [65].]

Further, **the living Substance is being which is in truth Subject**, or what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the **movement** of positing itself, or is **the mediation of its self-othering** with itself. **This Substance is, as Subject, pure, simple negativity**, and is for this very reason **the bifurcation of the simple**; it is the doubling which sets up opposition. Only **this self-restoring sameness**, or this **reflection in otherness within itself**—not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such—is the True. **It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.** [18]

The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development...

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

Already something thought, the **content** is the property of **substance**; existence [Dasein] has no more to be changed into the form of what is in-itself and implicit [Ansichseins], but **only the implicit—no longer merely something primitive, nor lying hidden within existence, but already present as a recollection—into the form of what is explicit, of what is objective to self** [Fursichseins]. [29]

But the Life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. **It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.**

It is this power, not as something positive...On the contrary, **Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it.** This **tarrying with the negative** is the magical power that converts it [the negative] into being. This power is identical with what we earlier called the **Subject, which by giving determinateness an existence in its own element supersedes abstract immediacy**, i.e. the immediacy which barely is, and thus is **authentic substance: that being or immediacy whose mediation is not outside of it but which is this mediation itself.** [32]

Determinate thoughts have the 'I', the power of the negative, or pure actuality, for the substance and element of their existence, whereas sensuous determinations have only powerless, abstract immediacy, or being as such. Thoughts become fluid when pure thinking, this inner *immediacy*, recognizes itself as a moment...**by giving up** not only the fixity of the pure concrete, which the 'I' itself is, in contrast with differentiated content, but also **the fixity of the differentiated moments which, posited in the element of pure thinking, share the unconditioned nature of the 'I'.** **Through this movement the pure thoughts become Notions**, and are only now what they are in truth, self-movements, circles, spiritual essences, which is what their **substance** is. [33]

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

The disparity which exists in consciousness between the 'I' and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the *negative* in general.

...Now although this negative appears at first as a disparity between the 'I' and its object, it is just as much the disparity of the substance with itself. Thus what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject.

Being is then absolutely mediated; it is a substantial content which is just as immediately the property of the 'I', it is self-like or the Notion.

With this the Phenomenology of Spirit is concluded. [37]

To know something falsely means that there is a disparity between knowledge and its Substance. **But this very disparity is the process of distinguishing in general, which is an essential moment [in knowing]. Out of this distinguishing...comes their identity, and this resultant**

identity is the truth...Disparity, rather, as the negative, the self, is itself still directly present in the True as such. [39]

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...**

Appearance is the arising and passing away that does not itself arise and pass away, but is in itself, and constitutes actuality and the movement of the life of truth.

The True is thus a vast Bacchanalian revel, with not a one sober; 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, whose existence is self-knowledge, and whose self-knowledge is just as immediately existence. [47]

Science dare only organize itself by the life of the Notion itself. The **determinateness**, which is taken from the schema and externally attached to an existent thing, **is**, in Science, **the self-moving soul of the realized content**. The **movement** of a being that **immediately** is, consists partly in **becoming an other** than itself, and thus becoming its own immanent **content**; partly in **taking back into itself this unfolding** [of its **content**] or this existence of it, i.e. in making **itself** into a moment, and **simplifying** itself into something **determinate**. In the former movement, **negativity** is the **differentiating** and positing of *existence*; in this **return** into self, it is the becoming of the **determinate simplicity**.

It is in this way that the **content** shows that its **determinateness** is not received from something else, nor externally attached to it, but that it determines itself, and ranges itself as a moment having its own place in the whole. [53]

The determinateness seems at first to be due entirely to the fact that it is related to an other, and its movement seems imposed on it by an alien power; but having its otherness within itself, and being self-moving, is just what is involved in the simplicity of thinking itself; for this simple thinking is the self-moving and self-differentiating thought. It is its own inwardness, it is the pure Notion. Thus common thought [Verständigkeit] too is a becoming, and, as this becoming, it is *reasonableness* [Vernünftigkeit]. [55]

...in speculative [begreifenden] thinking, as we have already shown, **the negative belongs to the content itself**, and is the **positive**, both as the **immanent movement** and determination of the **content**, and as the whole of this **process**.

Looked at as a result, **what emerges from this process is the determinate negative** which is consequently a positive content as well. [59]

Speculative [begreifendes] thinking behaves in a different way. Since **the Notion is the object's own self, which presents itself as the coming-to-be of the object**, it is not a passive Subject inertly supporting the Accidents; it is, on the contrary, **the self-moving Notion which takes its determinations back into itself**. In this movement the passive Subject itself perishes;

it enters into the differences and the content, and constitutes the determinateness, i.e. the differentiated content and its movement, instead of remaining inertly over against it. The solid ground which argumentation has in the passive Subject is therefore shaken, and only this movement itself becomes the object. [60]

7.