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NOTES ON EDUCATION AND HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT:

The Importance des Begriffs des Anerkennens

Robbie McClintock

Some preparatory remarks, first for orientation. What follows is a draft of a small part of what I hope will in turn become a part of a much larger, long-term work, should both the fates and my will-power favor its completion. The over-all work is slowly growing under the general title of Rousseau and American Educational Scholarship. It will consist of several volumes, how many I am not sure. The opening volume will be short and polemical. It will begin by comparing the scholarship on Rousseau generated by educators writing in English in the twentieth century with that devoted to Rousseau by political scientists, and will ask why the former body of work has been so sparse, repetitive, and unilluminating while the latter has been so rich, diverse, and stimulating. In pursuit of an answer to this question, I will examine the intellectual foundations laid for American educational scholarship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and will show how, through errors of omission and commission, an important tradition of educational thought found no harbor in the new world. I shall conclude this opening salvo with an impassioned argument that it would behoove American educational scholars, for both the sake of coherent thought and effective practice, to correct this error and master posthaste this tradition that they have hitherto ignored.

Such a tract as that described above, of which I have written a partial draft, will not alone effect its purpose. For that a larger effort, one at once more Machiavellian and more geistig, is required. So here is my plan and the elements of strategy behind it. The habits, skills and convictions of the educators of educators will not be changed merely by a hortatory appeal. In fact, the habits, skills, and convictions of the well established probably will not be changed at all, well established habits, skills, and convictions being what they are. Hence, the first element of strategy consists in taking seriously that pregnant aphorism from Nietzsche, an aphorism that is itself representative of the tradition of which I seek to speak -- "To educate educators! But the first ones must educate themselves. For these I write." Hence, my further volumes: I conceive these as aids in the self-education of the new type of educational scholar, those who can educate educators, who have mastered the tradition hitherto ignored. These further volumes I want to write as a series of Students' Handbooks on diverse figures -- Kant, Goethe, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Marx, Dilthey, Husserl, Weber, Heidegger, Mann, Gadamer (so many Germans! but not only Germans), Maine de Biran, Flaubert, Sartre, perhaps Camus and certainly Ricoeur. The intention in these handbooks will not be to inform prospective educators of educators about these figures, but to promote their

close combat, intellect to intellect, with these figures, for that is how a tradition is appropriated.

But where are these prospective educators of educators? This brings us to the second element of strategy -- the waiting game played through unseen but frenzied activity. We are in the midst of academic contraction, a contraction particularly serious in its effects on educational scholarship. It is safe to predict that such a contraction is part of a cyclical phenomenon, although, as with all cyclical phenomena, it is hard from within them to guess when the cycles are turning. The basic strategy for turning cyclic changes to one's benefit is well known, however, from the very slightest acquaintance with the stock market -- invest for minimum loss in bad times and maximum gain in good times -- and in academic parlance, I take this to mean, write during contraction, and publish during expansion. What follows, then, are draft notes for a part of one of these Students' Handbooks -- Hegel in American Educational Scholarship. I intend to work, with anal-retentive appearance, on such handbooks over the next ten years or so, sustained with the serene conviction -- aprts le d'sluge, moi -- so that when the times are better the work will be ripe.

I have described the following material as notes, and I should explain what I mean in doing so. Jacques Barzun used to exhort us in his seminar to take notes thoughtfully and efficiently -- his advice, like most good advice, has taken some time to set in. Notes that cannot be retrieved are of no use, nor are notes that cannot be read six months, even six weeks, after they were written. Further, he would suggest, the most difficult thing in writing is moving from the stage of research to that of actual composition. To take useful notes and to get over the block of thinking that one can finally start writing, as soon as one gets through those 64 new books just unearthed, one should start the process of composition in the course of taking notes: make your notes in the form of draft paragraphs, draft passages, draft chapters, whatever comes. The following notes are notes written in this manner -- whether they will be radically recast in the final work or survive in it more or less as they stand, I do not know.

Since they stand now as such notes, some peculiar conventions are in force within them. The most important of these concern bracketing. Brackets thus, <XXXXXX>, are used in some quotations to set off bracketed material in the original. Brackets thus, /XXXXXX/, are used to signify several types of interpolations and asides of my own -- sometimes they enclose explanatory material inserted into quotations, sometimes short-hand citations, sometimes abbreviated comments that will turn into footnotes, sometimes suggestions to myself for further research or reflection, sometimes recording a thought that will possibly grow into an independent part of the larger work. Usually it will be apparant from the nature of the material bracketed what function it is meant to serve. The following, ¶, is my abbreviation for "paragraph", and Hegel has been cited according to paragraph rather than page. I have used the Miller translation, and Hoffmeister's 1952 edition of the German. Among commentaries and studies, I have found Kojtve (especially the version in the original French, which is much fuller than the shortened translation), Hyppolite, Lauer, and Seeberger most useful.

I: The Phenomenology: A Book on Education

1
Various commentators, notably Seeberger, Hyppolite, and Kaufmann, have noted that Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit is a book about education. It is undoubtedly the most significant and difficult book about education that educational scholars in America have virtually entirely ignored. Rousseau's Emile they have violated by mindless editing, reducing a great and complex study in human formation into a quaint treatise on child development. But Hegel's Phenomenology has not even been violated; rather it has been passed over in mere silence. Yet Hegel explicitly put the Phenomenology forward as a study of education, Bildung, human formation. The following paragraphs will try to lay bare through an explication de texte Hegel's express claim to treat of education in the Phenomenology -- the claim was not simply that education was a topic he dealt with in passing, but rather that the whole book fundamentally concerned that topic.

2
Hegel composed the body of the Phenomenology very rapidly, under a stringent deadline, in 1806. At the end of the year, the deadline met, the printers busy setting up the text, Hegel wrote his famous "Preface", as well as the "Introduction" to the Phenomenology proper. In the "Preface", Hegel's main concern was not to adumbrate the Phenomenology itself, but rather to explain the need, at the present juncture of world-history, for his entire system, and to indicate the place of the Phenomenology in that system. Thus paragraphs 1-25 deal with the occasion for the system as a whole, and paragraphs 38-72 deal primarily with philosophic method, justifying Hegel's own dialectic of negativity, to be deployed in the Phenomenology and throughout the system, relative to more familiar methods in use. It is paragraphs 26-37 that describe the task of the Phenomenology directly. With close attention to his text, we will find that here Hegel does not merely say in passing that the Phenomenology touches on education, but that his entire description of the task of the Phenomenology is built on Bildung, the concept of formative education.

3
§26 is preceded by a break in the German text. The paragraph opens by stating that the standpoint of science is one in which knowledge is known simultaneously as in-and-for-itself. The individual has the right to demand of science a ladder by which he can climb up to that standpoint of science from the individual's starting point, the immediate certainty of himself.

4
In §27, Hegel concisely states that providing such a ladder is the task of this phenomenology of spirit, the book that follows the "Preface."

5
A small break then comes between §27 and §28 in the German text: the following paragraphs elaborate the task of this phenomenology and the opening sentence of this section immediately defines the task as a problem of education: "The task of leading the individual from his uneducated standpoint to knowledge had to be seen in its universal sense, just as it was the universal individual, self-conscious Spirit, whose formative education had to be studied." Hegel here speaks retrospectively, in the past tense, of the Phenomenology as a whole, which had been completely written prior to his writing the "Preface."

6 ¶28 and ¶29 describe generally the educational task to be accomplished in the Phenomenology. It is two-fold. First to outline the educative experience of the universal Spirit as it has moved in actuality from something completely encapsulated in itself, simple consciousness, to its full embodiment and realization in and for itself as absolute knowledge, the actualized identity of Subject and Substance. Second, in doing that, to provide the concrete individual with an effective, pedagogic aid, with the help of which he or she can reach the standpoint of science without having to relive existentially all the modes of consciousness, drinking them to their often bitter dregs, which have slowly led, in the totality of human experience, to the possibility of the standpoint of science. ¶29 ends: "How this the dual pedagogic task is done must now be described more precisely, and Hegel devotes paragraphs 30-37 to that more precise description of the dual pedagogic task.

7 He opens this more precise description in paragraphs 30-32 by describing in general, highly Socratic terms, the pedagogical function of Sections A, B, and C of the Phenomenology, those devoted to Consciousness, Self-consciousness, and Reason. ¶30 introduces the problem of familiarity for any erst educative effort: it makes people think they understand what they do not understand. ¶31 asserts that the familiarity of established abstractions must be broken down if any genuine advance is to be made. ¶32 suggests that the familiar can be broken down through the analysis of ideas, which is the work of Understanding, der Verstand, "the most astonishing and mightiest of powers, or rather the absolute power." This Verstand accomplishes by entering into the familiar given and by there dwelling on the negative in the given -- the not-given that is a part of the given. Through this dwelling in the negative, the full work of reason is eventually accomplished and the first rungs of the pedagogic ladder are mounted, by universal Spirit in the totality of human experience as it learns in pain and anguish to find the not-given in the given by exhausting the possibilities of each given, and by the concrete individual by patiently following the account of the essential steps made by the universal Spirit in its Bildungsgeschichte, its educational history.

8 ¶33 opens, however, asserting that this ascent does not suffice -- in Platonic terms, Spirit has climbed out from the cave and learned to contemplate the forms, but it still faces the descent back: "The fact that the object represented becomes the property of pure self-consciousness, its elevation to universality in general, is only one aspect of formative education /Bildung/, not its fulfillment." The pedagogical treatise that is the Phenomenology must continue and paragraphs 33-37 describe the character of that continuation. The problem of education in modern times differs from that facing the ancients. Ancient culture was not endowed with ready-made abstractions; the problem was to educate the mind, caught in the immediacy of concrete experience, the only given, to a capacity to form abstractions. In the present day, extended repertories of abstractions are ready at hand and the pedagogical problem is to bring them to life so that they will be known, not merely as thoughts, but as "Notions," that is, in the German, Begriffe, that by which Spirit can begreifen, can understand, comprehend, conceive, grasp; and further touch, feel, and handle Substance; and in doing so, Spirit can

-- still as implications of Begriff, begreifen -- Spirit can see itself included, comprised, contained, implied in Substance.

¶36 and 37, especially, state the second stage in the dual pedagogic task of the Phenomenology, that of presenting the process by which Reason, for both the universal Spirit and the concrete individual, becomes an object to itself, still driven by the capacity to dwell in the negative, to see the not-given in the given, and to alienate itself from itself into the world and then to recognize itself in its alienated condition, finally to culminate through that recognition in the identity of Subject and Substance, in the complete humanization of the world and the recognition of the world as a Substance completely humanized. "Thus what seems to happen outside of /Spirit/, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject. When it has shown this completely, Spirit has made its existence identical with its essence; it has itself for its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy and the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome. Being is then immediately mediated /vermittelt: mediated, intervened; adjusted, arranged; negotiated, established; brought about, facilitated, secured, procured; reconciled with itself; 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). Hegel has run through the whole Phenomenology, describing its contents in terms of its dual pedagogic task, and that is the whole of his discussion in the "Preface" of the Phenomenology as such.

In sum, these paragraphs, 26-37, the main paragraphs in the "Preface" dealing explicitly with the Phenomenology, describe that work as a study of education, a phenomenological description of the education of the Spirit in the totality of human experience and an educative aid by which the individual can move less painfully through that education up to the standpoint of science which has been achieved by Spirit. The pedagogic itinerary Hegel charted in these paragraphs, and in the work itself, is precisely the Platonic itinerary of the Myth of the Cave: first from consciousness to self-consciousness and then to universal reason by ever dwelling on the deficiency of the given and then back into the concrete substance of human life as Spirit objectifies itself through a process of alienation, Entfremdung, making itself fremd, strange to itself, in the objective institutions of human existence, and then finally learning to recognize itself in these, to see these in their totality as the actuality of itself and to see itself as the reality of them, to humanize the world and to recognize responsibility for that humanization of it. In the "Introduction" to the Phenomenology Hegel again reiterated the point: "The series of configurations which consciousness goes through along this road is, in reality, the detailed history of the education of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science" (¶78 Hegel's emphasis). If we want to know Hegel's view of education, it is up to us to master the Phenomenology.

II: The Role of Recognizing and Some Questions for Educators:
Three Variations on a Hegelian Theme

First Variation: The Text Prospective

Self-consciousness, then, comes to exist ("exist," here, does not mean merely the Dasein which is characteristic of things) only by means of an "operation" which poses it in being as it is for itself. And this operation is essentially an operation on and by another self-consciousness. I am a self-consciousness only if I gain for myself recognition from another self-consciousness and if I grant recognition to the other. This mutual recognition, in which individuals recognize each other as reciprocally recognizing each other, creates the element of spiritual life -- the medium in which the subject is an object to itself, finding itself completely in the other yet doing so without abrogating the otherness that is essential to self-consciousness. /Hyppolite, Genesis and Structure, p. 166./

11 This passage triggers for me reflections in the light of Hegel on a concern that has long troubled me, a concern partly professional and partly personal, should that distinction have any proper place in the matter to begin with. The concern ultimately involves the problem of preserving and enhancing that which is educative in higher education, the part of education we are all, for now at least, primarily engaged in. But let us begin with Hegel. The reciprocal recognition between one's own self-awareness and that of others, a recognition in which one finds oneself in the other without abrogating the otherness of the other or the integrity of the self -- such reciprocal recognition between self-consciousnesses creates the life of mind and heart. That is the starting point. To me, it rings true. Starting with one's own desires, hopes, dreams, questions, concerns, seeking recognition of them in another -- not merely a faint word of encouragement and praise, but real evidence that such desires, hopes, dreams, questions, concerns belong equally (not necessarily identically) to the self-awareness of the other, that my self-conscious enterprise is in actuality a common, interpersonal enterprise -- this is the basis of spiritual life, for with such recognition the desires, hopes, dreams, questions, concerns come alive with possibilities of discourse, disagreement, conflict, and cooperation. Without reciprocal recognition between my self-consciousness and that of others, my thought and emotion, my life, my lived experience, is doomed to a silent solipsism, at most a sequence of frustrating failures in communication.

12 Such necessity for reciprocal recognition between self-consciousnesses is not itself the problem on which I meditate, but rather the condition, the starting-point. The tragedy, the difficulty, the problem, one which Hegel makes most clear, is that the quest of such recognition always entails the taking of risks, no small risks at that, but, at bottom, the fight, face-to-face, for life or death, and always, even where everything appears fastidiously sanitized by an ethos of civility, a struggle in which each thought and emotion disclosed is put forth at the risk of suppression, rejection, denial

by the other to whom it is disclosed. Hegel answers Darwinism prior to Darwin: human life is not a mere struggle for survival, but a struggle for recognition, the struggle of self-aware persons desiring to be recognized by other self-aware persons and to recognize them -- the Homeric hero striding into the field of battle, brandishing his weapons, imprecating his opponent with insults, and celebrating the honor of his lineage, ready to kill or to be killed, fights not for survival, but to compel the recognition of that which he takes to be his essential self, the honor of his name and of his line. Such outright killing and being killed has largely been sublimated through established patterns of achieved recognition and persists on the one hand as a residual violence haunting our streets, tragic signs of enduring imperfections in our patterns of achieved recognition, and on the other as recurrent upheavals of collective war in which whole peoples mobilize their power, deploying it on the fields of battle, imprecating their opponent with insults, and celebrating the virtue of their nation and the justice of their cause, ready to destroy or be destroyed. But the risks long since entailed by the struggle for reciprocal recognition among self-aware persons are usually far more subtle, yet not less fundamental, than this arche of physical combat: here we begin to encounter the pedagogical problem posed by the risks inherent in spiritual life.

13
To get to the particular dimension that troubles me in the pedagogical problem posed by the necessity of risk, let me narrow the matter somewhat, still in the light of Hegel, starting from a restatement of the rudimentary situation. With respect to the life of the mind, the self-creation of culture by active, self-conscious persons, the significance of the death that is risked, even when it is in fact a case of risking the either-or of life or death, is not the significance of a mere biological death -- what is far more at risk is the life of the psyche sustained by the life of the soma. For spiritual life, the destruction of the psyche is the serious matter -- the fallen hero is not only a dead body, but a shame to that for which he stood, a loss never to be recovered. Thus there has always been an extra poignancy to the untimely death of the high-minded and the deep-striving, to the budding poets and artists strewn on the fields of Flanders. In the struggle for reciprocal recognition risked by the psyche, by self-consciousness, which is the source of the spiritual life, the risk is always real and substantial, although it is not always, not even usually, encountered through the objective staking of physical life. The desire for recognition inherent in self-consciousness entails that self-consciousness put itself into question and risk non-recognition, mis-recognition, and this can be as devastating to self-consciousness as the shells of Verdun to the body. Meditate on the young Malcolm X, hesitatingly, hopefully, confessing to his teacher his desire to prepare for college and an intellectual life -- 'Nay, my boy, that would be unwise, an overreaching not for your kind. You had best prepare to be a plumber, carpenter, perhaps a machinists mate -- such walks suit your type better.' The risk was taken and at that point lost, and the way thereafter was a long descent through degradation to despair -- finally, in that case, at least ambiguously, a despair then overcome and redeemed. But of all the times self-consciousness has put itself in risk and lost, seeking recognition and

finding rejection, experiencing the destruction of its hope of linking self and other, steadily succumbing to solitary solipsism of despair, of all the many times this has happened, what is the proportion of those who eventually recover their spirit relative to those who do not? We can be certain that some fail to recover it, probably many, perhaps most, and we can thus know that the risk run by self-consciousness as it puts itself in question in the quest of reciprocal recognition is real, all-too-real, even when physical death is not, in the instant, palpably at stake.

14
Risk, real and substantial -- that is part of the problem, its essential background. Hegel would teach that the risk self-consciousness must run in its quest for reciprocal recognition necessary to spiritual life is very, very real, and Hegel would say that it is not he, but life itself, that so teaches the necessity of this risk. Now the pedagogical problem that troubles me is not precisely the problem of the young Malcolm X, in its infinite concrete variations -- the youth who takes the risk, loses, and suffers as a result. I introduce this example, and its infinity of variations, to heighten awareness that the risk to be run on entering the spiritual life is real and substantial, for recognizing the reality and substantiality of the risk is essential for ██████████ coming to grips with the actual pedagogical problem: how, despite the reality and substantiality of the risk, can we withstand the temptation to shirk the risk, to find strategies by which we never need to put ourselves in question? The pedagogical problem is not the problem of the young Malcolm, but the problem of his cowardly, comfortably despairing teacher: how can teachers, recognizing the reality of the risks run by self-consciousness in its quest for reciprocal recognition, avoid the infinite variations, all of them dead and dispirited -- reach not too high; here is the way to modest, predictable, and safe success; take it and forswear all thoughts of unique achievement. Remember that most gruesome, somewhat heterodox, vestibule to Hell that Dante inserted into the well-worn vision: the souls of those who had been unwilling to risk the risk, who had neither sinned nor not sinned, the hordes dashing after the blank banner, eternally experiencing the inverse of their untroubled nothingness in life, forever running here then there, goaded by fearsome wasps, bloated from relentless, stinging bites that ooze incessant puss and blood. The young Malcolm's teacher is there, for had he still been engaged in his own struggle for reciprocal recognition, he would have recognized himself in Malcolm and Malcolm in himself; he would have answered differently, perhaps well or poorly, but in a way that would have better sustained Malcolm's quest for recognition.

15
Let us now state the pedagogical problem in a phrase: excessive avoidance of risk. This unwillingness to put the conscious self in danger in a quest for reciprocal recognition, myself face-to-face with the self of the self-aware other, seems most portentous on the higher levels of education, those where the life of spirit putatively approaches its full-blooded majority. There the striving self falters and hunkers down before the impersonal shadows of prospective careers. The desire of self-consciousness to achieve recognition melts into the impersonal limbo of sought success; the questions loose their

vitality, the thoughts become mundane, the vital issues are to be dodged, apparent error at all cost avoided. Basic to this severing of intellectual activity from its roots in the real risk of self-conscious life is an endemic confusion that has developed between the concept of success and that of achievement. Unravelling these two concepts in the light of Hegel would be an extended process, perhaps to be attempted anon -- for now let me launch a mere preliminary trajectory of a thought. Hegel would locate "careers" and "success" in the conceptual domain of self-alienated spirit, the domain in which the spiritual life is preoccupied with the task of objectifying itself in the world of institutions and civil society. The risk entailed in this domain -- risk is never absent, no matter how carefully, completely avoided (and that perhaps marks the trajectory of the thought here being launched) -- the risk entailed in the domain of self-alienated spirit is precisely the risk of "careers" and "success," the risk that self-consciousness will loose contact with itself, depersonalize itself, forgetting that the spiritual life arises from out of it, the desire of the self-conscious self to achieve concrete recognition of itself for what it is and of the self-conscious other for what he or she may be. What happens then, when self-consciousnesses loose their willingness to risk real recognition? Nothing much on the surface of things, at first, at least, but beneath the surface there grows a widening split between inner and outer life, a heightening tension, a steady withdrawal of the spiritual life from the formal institutions, a withdrawal that leads to the atrophy of a Rome or the upheaval of an ancien r\$gime. A problem for the educators of educators: how, in the face of their ever more reified profession, can they provide for the education of educators in such a way that the animating risks inherent in the quest by self-aware persons for reciprocal recognition are not unduly repressed and obviated? Can we educate professionals who will face the risks inherent in their professionalism?

/Thoughts passed over in silence yet worth returning to:

Nietzsche as a reader of Hegel

Hegel's two paths: the path of conflict -- servile consciousness ultimately sets the agenda; the path of the Phenomenology -- or the path of cooperation -- reciprocally respecting self-consciousnesses genuinely entertain one another's animating questions (the absence of ulterior agenda's); a path explored in Hegel's early writings which might loosely be seen as writings on love. Paths other than conflict or cooperation eventually stunt and atrophy the spiritual life./

Second Variation: The Text Engaged

16
In the reflections above I sought to suggest that in every movement, motivated by the desire inherent in self-consciousness, leading to the development of spiritual life, the life of thought and emotion, action and achievement, experienced by persons living among persons, an element of risk -- real and substantial risk -- had to be faced. Facing such risks, I contended, was necessary, integral to spiritual development, long after the primitive life-and-death struggle for recognition had been fought and sublimated into achieved patterns of recognition. At every moment of recognition, those involved had to put some element of their life in jeopardy, if not life in the biological sense, then the particular, concrete way of life, the Dasein of the present, for recognition to occur, for recognition is the certainty that in oneself and in the other there is the capacity to choose and change. I developed this basic thought about the inherent risk in all development without close reference to Hegel's work and Hegel did not dwell in the Phenomenology on the continuity of the jeopardy into which reciprocally recognizing persons always had to put themselves, on the multiple forms such risks take in the course of the full development of Geist. Hegel did dramatically present the original risk, the struggle for life and death:

They must engage in this struggle, for they must raise their certainty of being for themselves to truth, both in the case of the other and in their own case. And it is only through staking one's life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is not just being, not the immediate form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life, but rather that there is nothing present in it which could not be regarded as a vanishing moment, that it is only pure being-for-itself. The individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a person, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. Similarly, just as each stakes his own life, so each must seek the other's death, for it values the other no more than itself; its essential being is present to it in the form of an 'other', it is outside of itself and must rid itself of its self-externality. (§187)

17
Hegel here, at the moment of original recognition, insists that those achieving the recognition must be ready to stake their lives, but he thereafter refers little to the matter of the risk involved. We can easily see that the basic structure of the situation need not be one in which the life at stake is the biological life -- it can be, and preferably should be, the immediately given way of life, the Dasein, the givens of existence enjoyed by two self-consciousnesses at the moment of their reciprocal recognition; these are risked for the recognition might, perhaps must, entail their change. That Hegel did not reiterate that this risk was always present does not at all suggest that he held it to be transcended completely by the original struggle for life and death. We know well that Hegel, phenomenologically describing the development of Geist, progresses, not by traversing a narrow line of thought, but via continuous incorporation,

for Hegel is not like a juggler prancing across a tightrope, but like an ever-growing snowball, rolling on, picking up everything that it passes over. "The individual who has not risked his life..." not the biological life, but the way of life, the ideas I now hold essential, are at risk every time I seek recognition by and of another self-consciousness, for that recognition may well compel the transformation, the Aufhebung, the upheaval of these ideas. Hegel put this crucial point in a single sentence and to grasp its significance, let us look closely at the way he introduced the original struggle of two self-conscious persons for reciprocal recognition.

18 Let us start with the introductory paragraphs (§§166-177) to the whole chapter on Self-Consciousness. This introductory section moves the phenomenological description away from the prior pre-occupation with consciousness into an engagement with developing self-consciousness: unlike the simple consciousness of the previous section, a consciousness that looked out on the domain of inorganic things, seeking to grasp a truth of them mistakenly thought to lie passively rooted in them alone, first through sense-certainty, then through perception, and finally through understanding, self-consciousness has become aware of itself as a living consciousness, and as such it finds its objects, insofar as it finds them, as well as finding itself, within the realm of life, within organic process. Hegel here presents a condensed, highly abstract explication of the Begriff of life, through which he locates self-consciousness within life and sets the task that self-consciousness must complete if it is to become fully identical with itself. Here, as so often in his exposition, Hegel's description turns on the distinction between the in-itself and the for-itself. Life-in-itself, which at this point only we, the phenomenological describers of the totality, can grasp, is an infinite, self-creating, self-maintaining, ever-active totality that exists through the continuous, unending creation and destruction and re-creation of all its parts, in all its internal distinctions, a vast, self-unifying disquiet in space and time (§§169-171). Life-for-itself, however, does not yet exist in this way, self-consistently realized in-itself; life-for-itself at first exists simply as something that life-in-itself points toward, toward consciousness (§172), "this other Life," self-consciousness, the consciousness that "has itself as pure 'I' for object" (§173). To begin with, at the stage of the advent of self-consciousness, life-for-itself begins to exist in the simple, tautological certainty of a self-conscious I: life is the object of my life.

19 Life is the object of my life, this teeming, vital world around the subject, present there at first as the other of the subject, the object, and the subject, self-consciousness, is simply the "negative essence" (§174), the power of negation, which acts on the object, negating its otherness, raising the other up into itself. From this situation, important definitions follow. Desire, integral to life-for-itself, is wanting the life that is the object of my life, negating the otherness of the surrounding vital world, making it mine; but this wanted life that is the object of my life is at least implicitly not only the particular life-for-itself that I happen to be living, but, more pregnantly, life-in-itself, life in its totality, and thus desire, life-for-itself negating the otherness of life-in-itself leads to the identity of the

two. Development, therefore, resulting necessarily from desire, from wanting life as the object of my life, is the process by which self-consciousness actualizes the implicit life-in-itself as the life that is the object of its life-for-itself (§174).

20
Desire is frustrated in this endeavor, however, with respect to the otherness of inert things, for it cannot adequately overcome the otherness of the thing. Without yet introducing the term, Hegel then defines recognition in paragraphs 175-177, showing how desire can find adequate satisfaction only in the reciprocal recognition of another self-consciousness, which raises self-consciousness to the Concept of Spirit. Throughout these paragraphs, Hegel has been writing from the standpoint of the completed system, not the phenomenological process, intent to show that the coming moment in the process is one of great significance for the emergence of Spirit. The full identification of subject and object, Hegel observes, can occur only between self-consciousnesses: each subject independently negates its own objecthood, discloses itself as subject to the other subject, which is at once its object. This, in its most abstract form appropriate to the completed system, is the process of recognition, out of which Spirit emerges. Recognition -- my acknowledgement of the other self-conscious life-for-itself as part of life-in-itself and my being acknowledged by another self-conscious life-for-itself as being a life-for-itself that is part of life-in-itself -- such recognition is the process through which certainty becomes truth. Recognition, acknowledgement, Anerkennen -- the process for the infinitely complex unifying of life-in-itself and life-for-itself into life-in-and-for-itself -- is the Begriff of Spirit, "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'." (§177)

/See draft "On Spanning" for the problem of the coherence of we-statements. Theodore Litt, Individuum und Gesellschaft, for the I-you, I-thou, alternatives (also Buber). Dilthey's version of "objective Spirit" as one that does not merge the I into the We./

21
Self-consciousness must experience the development that leads to the realization of Spirit as it has just been stated; the Phenomenology must describe the process of that development; and to start that description Hegel opens the section on the "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage." It begins with paragraph 178, which is set off in the German text by a break before paragraph 179. This introductory paragraph reviews the preceding very succinctly and states that a detailed exposition of the process of Recognition will follow. Paragraphs 179-185, there being another break between 185 and 186 in the German text, state the conditions that must be met for reciprocal recognition to take place in the rudimentary situation of one naive self-consciousness face-to-face with another naive self-consciousness: recognition cannot be attained through the unilateral action of one alone, for they must "recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another" (§184). Hegel then says (§185) that we have to look closely at how this process of achieving mutual recognition appears to self-consciousness, how each of the naive self-consciousnesses experience the encounter leading

to their recognizing themselves as reciprocally recognizing one another. My intention here is to look very closely at this process, expanding and concretizing paragraph 186 with a hypothetical example in order to bring out the full significance of the sentence that opens paragraph 187.

22 After a small break, paragraph 186 sets the scene for the confrontation of two naive self-consciousnesses, explaining the problem they must reciprocally solve, each independently, for recognition to take place. The text is as follows:

Self-consciousness is, to begin with, simple being-for-itself, self-equal through the exclusion from itself of everything else. For it, its essence and absolute object is 'I'; and in this immediacy, or in the <mere> being, of its being-for-itself, it is an individual. What is 'other' for it is an unessential, negatively characterized object. But the 'other' is also a self-consciousness; one individual is confronted by another individual. Appearing thus immediately on the scene, they are for one another like ordinary objects, independent shapes, individuals submerged in the being <or immediacy> of Life -- for the object in its immediacy is here determined as Life. They are, for each other, shapes of consciousness which have not yet accomplished the movement of absolute abstraction, of rooting-out all immediate being, and of being merely the purely negative being of self-identical consciousness; in other words, they have not as yet exposed themselves to each other in the form of pure being-for-self, or as self-consciousnesses. Each is indeed certain of its own self, but not of the other, and therefore its own self-certainty still has no truth. For it would have truth only if its own being-for-self had confronted it as an independent object, or, what is the same thing, if the object had presented itself as this pure self-certainty. But according to the Notion of recognition this is possible only when each in its own self through its own action, and again through the action of the other, achieves this pure abstraction of being-for-self.

Self-consciousness is certain of itself as I, conscious of everything else as the other.

Self-consciousness as the person.
The other is the not-I.

Two persons encounter each other, merely seeing each other as part of the encompassing not-I.

Each perceives that the other lives, for each is caught up in a round of vital activities.

Neither can yet recognize or be recognized as a self-conscious being, for neither has yet found out how to display his or her ability to rise above the immediate givens of life, their capacity to change their lives through the employment of negation; each appears determined by their surroundings.

Each knows its own capacity for self-conscious negation, but not that of the other; without reciprocal recognition, self-certainty will be isolated from truth, caught in a mute solipsism.

For recognition to occur, each must manifest his or her capacity for self-conscious negation in such a way that it can be unmistakably recognized through the veil of the concrete particulars of outward existence./

23 Let us elaborate this text, indulging in some of the picture thinking against which Hegel warns. Two persons, each a being-for-itself, primordially meet. Each, like us all, is a simple self-consciousness, aware of its 'I' as the locus and the object of its life, an individual. Everything around it is merely an "object" in the vital field, in the concrete immediacy of its life -- an apple to be eaten, a rock to sit on, a tree for shade, water to drink, animals darting about to hunt, an Other there yonder to be observed with curiosity and caution. This Other yonder shows signs of consciousness, as the One here by the rock must do too, for the Other steps over the briar across the path. The One here starts to wonder.

Is this consciousness of the Other merely like the consciousness of the fleet rabbit I killed this morning? Or might it be like my own? How do I differ from the rabbit? It is aware only of the world around it. It will pick its way, as the Other did over the briar, but it seems only aware of the world -- if startled, it will always run. I am aware of myself; if startled, I can stop my fright, negate it, and ask what startled me. I am aware of myself and can make choices about myself -- the way I have chosen not to kill the pigs around here, even though they are easy to kill and can be eaten, but I want to be the person that does not kill pigs. Does this Other over there have the same kind of consciousness, this self-consciousness? Does this Other decide not to do certain things that might be done in order to be the person who does not do these things? Will this Other recognize my self-consciousness? Perhaps this Other is also a person who does not kill pigs. Perhaps this Other will think it foolish that I don't kill pigs. Maybe I am.

24 For Hegel, self-consciousness is the ability to negate the objectivity of things out there -- the fact that pigs are edible and killable -- and by so negating objectivity to assign meaning for oneself to the objects, to incorporate them into one's subjecthood through a meaning of which one is self-consciously certain -- 'I am the person who does not kill pigs.' Our naive self-consciousness above is in a state of primitive solipsism -- desire is evident in the wondering whether the Other is also a self-consciousness -- and Hegel's proposition that the truth of the self-certainty of self-consciousness is in the other self-consciousness is evident by the glimmer of self-doubt engendered in the One by the possibility that the Other is equally self-aware and might find it foolish not to kill pigs.

25 Let us assume that the Other above is self-conscious, with the self-certainty that he is the person who does not kill rabbits, but that pigs are both delicious and nutritious, and furthermore let us note that just then a fat sow waddles between the One and the Other as they eye each other reflectively. The Other, of course, grabs his club and runs for the sow. The One might shrug and think that if the Other wants to kill pigs, that is his business, in which case no recognition will occur, but we might suspect that the desire in the One to escape his primitive solipsism might lead him to rush to the defense of the sow, as a result of which the startled Other -- 'here is a pig-defender!' -- would stop wonderingly while the sow squirmed, snorting, to safety. The Other would then reflect that, like himself, the One is a self-conscious being who, strangely, does not kill pigs. Eager to display his own self-consciousness, the Other spots a rabbit caught in a snare set by the One and defiantly sets it free. At this point, the One will have been able to recognize the Other as a being that self-consciously does

not kill rabbits and the Other will have been able to recognize the One as a being that self-consciously does not kill pigs. They will not yet be able, however, fully "anerkennen sich, als gegenseitig sich anerkennend," to acknowledge themselves as reciprocally acknowledging themselves, for only one of them, the Other, in defiantly setting the rabbit free in response to the defense of the sow by the One, has shown to the One his awareness of the significance of the self-conscious action the One had taken. The One has disclosed a self-conscious action, but has not yet disclosed his awareness that the Other too was capable of self-conscious action.

26 At this point, Hegel suggests, the stage is set for the self-conscious struggle for life and death, the fight, not over brute subsistence, but over self-consciously chosen ways of life: to complete the reciprocity of the recognition by way of the struggle for life and death, the One must engage the Other in a battle with whether not-to-kill-pigs or not-to-kill-rabbits hanging in the balance. If one of the combatants kills the other, the opportunity for recognition vanishes -- back to the bush. If, however, one of the combatants decides to capitulate rather than be killed, then a primitive reciprocal recognition will occur, the victor being recognized, the loser merely recognizing, and from this point Hegel moves on to his elaboration of the resultant master-slave relationship. For our present purposes, we do not need to follow out Hegel's analysis of that relationship, but rather we need to stick with the situation just prior to the struggle for life and death. I have spun the extended, rather fanciful example of the One and the Other in order to bring out certain features of that situation which Hegel states but moves over very rapidly.

27 With our example, we can imagine, with the help of some further fancifulness, an alternative to the struggle for life and death through which the cycle of recognition might be completed. The One has defended the sow and the Other has freed the rabbit, but that still leaves them not quite sure that "they recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another" (§184). Just then another hapless pig trundles by and a rabbit bounds into the open close at hand. The One, who has disclosed that he does not kill pigs but not disclosed his understanding that the Other does not kill rabbits, might then reflect that the important thing for him, really, is to get to know this Other, and that for him, the One, the important thing about not killing pigs is not eating them, and with that reflection, we can well imagine that the One, who hitherto did not kill pigs, would strike the passing porker a mighty blow and plunk the carcass in front of the Other. With that, we might imagine the Other reflecting that on his part the important thing about not killing rabbits is not eating them, whereupon he lets fly an unerring stone -- thwock! -- a rabbit for his new-found friend. Unlike the portentous society of master and slave, we have here a rather idyllic community of cooperation coming into being -- One-Other Land.

28 Hegel's reason for completing the basic recognition between self-consciousnesses through a struggle for life and death, culminating in a relationship of lordship and bondage, was not a conviction that only in this way can a reciprocal recognition be completed, but rather that this particular mode of completion, one that certainly occurred frequently in history, was the

particular one that best set the existential conditions for the discovery of historically, spiritually, creative labor. Our reason, however, for elaborating the possibility of an alternative path at the start is to show more clearly what must be put into jeopardy, what must be risked, for reciprocal recognition to occur, whether in a setting of conflict or cooperation, whether early in the development of spiritual life or late. What must be put into jeopardy in any occasion for reciprocal recognition is stated by Hegel in the opening sentence of paragraph 187: "The presentation of itself/a self-consciousness engaged in achieving reciprocal recognition/ , however, as the pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any specific existence /Dasein/, not to the individuality common to existence as such, that it is not attached to life." Self-consciousness is not simply the particular behavior peculiarly meaningful to a person at a particular moment; it is more fundamentally the negative power through which the person defines for himself the peculiar meaning of the particular behavior: not-all-these-things, but the not-not-this-thing that elevates this-thing into something particularly meaningful. To display this power effectively for recognition, self-consciousness must go one step further: not-all-these-things and not-even-the-not-not-this-thing.

/How does Hegel's conception of self-consciousness, that is mind, among other things, relate to the Cartesian tradition? Can Descartes' deduction from doubt be restated as a work of pure negativity -- I negate, therefore I am? In the opening paragraphs of the section on Reason, Hegel qualifiedly accepts Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, contending, however, that the only transcendental part of the ego is its negativity, all else being a construction through the deployment of that negativity. Does Hegel's self-consciousness as negativity ameliorate the much-worked mind-body problem? Can a computer function without the power of negativity, the on-off of the binary digit, being built into it? Is negativity an alternative to incorrigibility in the theory of mind, or an act prior to incorrigibility? Does Hegel fall within Rorty's critique of minds as mirrors? Is a complete and adequate behavioral account of the modes of negation possible?/

29 We may agree with Hegel that the most fundamental, unmistakable, reciprocal demonstration by two self-consciousnesses that they are not attached to their immediate, given, specific existence, that they can negate the particulars that objectively characterize their lives, is through the gratuitous, face-to-face struggle for life and death. But Hegel was clear that the struggle for life and death was only an extreme demonstration, and a reductio ad absurdum insofar as it results in death, of what must always be put in jeopardy, in risk, namely, the attachment to a particular, concrete mode of living. The self-consciousness unwilling to risk those attachments cannot be recognized as an autonomously self-defining self-consciousness, for it puts itself forward as fully and irrevocably defined by that particular set of outer attachments that hold for it at the moment -- its consciousness is as fully determined by the external world as is the rabbit's; it is incapable of surprising the world, for it always runs when startled; it is mere consciousness and not a self-consciousness capable of being recognized by another

self-consciousness. In our fanciful foundation of One-Other Land, the One avoided the struggle for life and death by putting into jeopardy his given self-definition as the One who does not kill pigs, by negating it, by revising it into the One who does not eat pigs, so that the Other might recognize his reciprocal recognition. Here is the basic proposition about risk: to desire and seek the recognition of one's self-consciousness, to be capable of reciprocally recognizing another's self-consciousness, one must be ready to risk the negation, the overcoming, the upheaval of the present, given condition of that self-consciousness and the mode of existence with which it correlates.

30 To return to the concern of the reflections in the previous variation, let us restate the question there put: how can we educate educators who will be able to hold themselves continually in this jeopardy and thus be able to enter into reciprocal recognition with their students?

Third Variation: The Text Retrospective

31 To come to grips with this problem of risk and its proper place in education, let us go over Hegel's concept of Anerkennen and its importance in the Phenomenology of Geist one more time, this time at somewhat further remove from Hegel's text. First, let us observe that Hegel's term, translated through abstract nouns in English -- "recognition" or "acknowledgement" -- is not the equivalent German noun, die Anerkennung, but a nominalized verb infinitive, das Anerkennen, which can best be approximated in English by gerunds, "recognizing" or "acknowledging." We might here advance the hypothesis that for Hegel in English the answer to any question that would seem to invite an ontological proposition -- What is x? -- should be in the form of a gerund -- Self-consciousness is negating. Hegel in German answers this particular question about self-consciousness in diverse places (e.g. ¶22, 194, 399, 529) with a highly abstracted noun, "pure or absolute negativity," by which he means all possible forms of negating. Thus the eventual identity of the real and the rational arises as a possibility because neither denotes existent things, but activities, movements, creations: the processes of realizing and reasoning eventually converge and become identical. And further, as any question inviting an ontological assertion with Hegel is best answered with a gerund, so too, any gerund, any big gerund lumbering into the field of discourse, may very well be there because it answers to an ontological query. So let us ask, to what question might "recognizing" be answering?

32 Into what field of discourse does "recognizing" lumber? Into that on "Die Wahrheit der Gewissheit seiner selbst," "The Truth of the Certainty of Its Self." Let us turn the section title into a question: What is the truth of the certainty of its self? The answer is "recognizing." Self-consciousness is negating; it is negating in two keys, first the key of mere consciousness (for consciousness has been aufgehoben, heaved up into self-consciousness), and second the key of self-consciousness proper. In the former key, self-consciousness as mere consciousness is busy negating the dizzy stuff of raw awareness into a

cosmos of things, perceived and understood, identifying for self-consciousness a complex world of the other than itself. In the second key, the key of self-consciousness proper, self-consciousness sets out negating the otherness of the world of the other identified for it by consciousness. In so negating the otherness of the other identified by consciousness, self-consciousness creates a certainty of its self -- let us exemplify. Consciousness observes that here is a tree; indeed, here is an apple tree, bearing well-ripened fruit. The characteristic negating by consciousness is apparent here in its use of das Allgemein -- the all-common, the general, "the universal" as normally translated; "here," any here; "tree," any tree; "apple tree," any apple tree; that is, in each case, the specifically not-this-particular-this, but the abstract this of consciousness, used to define the particular-this-at-hand. Thus consciousness uses its negating to define something other for self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is negating, negating of the otherness created by the negating of consciousness; thus self-consciousness is, Hegel observes, Begierde überhaupt, "Desire in general," wanting, craving, doing so eagerly, impatiently. Self-consciousness negates the other into itself, it wants the other, it asserts that here is my tree, my apple tree, and its well-ripened fruit is mine, which I make myself certain of as I pluck it and eat it. Self-consciousness, by negating the otherness of things around it, achieves certainty of its self, a determinateness of itself for itself: I am the self that has just possessed this fruit I ate. We can see immediately now the importance of Recognizing, of Anerkennen, for this certainty of the isolated self-consciousness may or may not have truth to it, or, as long as the self-consciousness is completely isolated, its mere certainty of its self can suffice for truth since there is not occasion for the certainty being questioned, but as soon as the self-consciousness ceases to be isolated, the truth of its certainty of its self lies only in others recognizing its asserted certainties. Alone, I may be certain the apple tree is mine; in the midst of mutually recognizing persons, the apple tree may truly be mine, if they recognize it as such.

33
 Let us stand back for a moment and ask what, for Hegel, this certainty of its self is, the truth of which lies in others recognizing it. The certainty of its self is not merely some primitive appropriation, that this apple is mine which I demonstrate by eating it. "It is in self-consciousness, in the Notion of Spirit..." (§177). How suddenly is self-consciousness, which is negating, identified by Hegel with the Begriff of Spirit? Quite fundamentally -- self-consciousness is the negating of the other-making negations of consciousness, and as it does that, self-consciousness unifies subject and object. Eating something is, of course, only one of the most elementary forms of such self-conscious negating, leading to a determinate self-certainty. All acts, many of them highly cerebral, in which consciousness does not merely identify an object, be it a thing, a law, a principle, what have you, but in which self-consciousness identifies the object with itself, negating its otherness, making it part of its own determinate self, exemplify the negating that self-consciousness is. This activity is central in the process by which Geist creates itself, for it is the activity which identifies subject and object. And Anerkennen establishes truth in this process. Conscious negating defines an objective world; self-consciousness negating

unifies the objects of that world with a subject certain of its self; a multiplicity of self-consciousnesses reciprocally recognizing their self-certainties raise those self-certainties to truth; and true self-certainty is the concept of Spirit, which is actualized as diverse self-consciousnesses reciprocally recognize their manifold self-certainties. Anerkennen, therefore, is a most important activity in Hegel's understanding of human life, and this importance of Anerkennen to Hegel's understanding can also reveal to us something significant, and often frequently contested, about the character and implications of Hegel's vision.

What we have done in this meditation on Anerkennen is identify Hegel's theory of truth. Hegel's basic proposition here is that as self-consciousnesses, that is persons, reciprocally recognize their self-certainties, they raise those self-certainties to truth. This is to hold truth to depend on achieving intersubjective understanding, and to make claims to truth eminently, perhaps too easily, falsifiable. Recognizing the importance of recognizing in Hegel's phenomenology of Geist, we can see it as a radical humanism, one in which persons play the essential role. Query: why does Quentin Lauer, S.J., say nothing about the role of Anerkennen in raising self-certainty to truth in his commentary on this section of the Phenomenology?

34 If Anerkennen is Hegel's theory of truth and is fundamental to his vision, let us now ask how it takes place and what, in its workings, might permit it to function in the flux of life as an adequate source of truth. This question will lead us back to the importance of risk, staking something in the quest of recognizing and being recognized. Anerkennen, Hegel holds, does not take place easily. Recognizing does not occur when someone passively hears another reveal a self-certainty -- we have all at one time or another said something important to ourselves and heard in response, "Oh! How interesting," which means lets talk about something else, or "I never thought of that before!" followed sotto voce with "and I never will again." No recognizing occurs here, for tolerating is not the same as recognizing. It is not accidental that one of the keener twentieth-century students of Hegel, Marcuse, should develop a critique of repressive tolerance. Recognizing must be reciprocal, and it must concern things that matter to those involved. The struggle for life and death that Hegel presents as the basic illustration of recognizing, although a recognizing that culminates very imperfectly, as it should, coming at the stage of the Phenomenology that it does, is nevertheless properly the paradigmatic illustration, for in all cases of Anerkennen there is a sense in which the persons involved are together determining their lives in the face of death.

35 One must face death to achieve freedom; "it is only through staking one's life that freedom is won" (§187). Let us reflect for a moment on the relation of death to recognizing. Hegel described a primitive struggle for life and death between two self-conscious persons and insisted that each must stake his own life. He went on (§188) to insist that recognizing did not result at all, however, from the death of one or the other -- such death simply removed the occasion for either recognizing the other or being recognized. Hence,

recognizing comes, not through death, but in the face of death. In this primitive case two persons make their reciprocal recognizing of each other possible by displaying their self-consciousness, their willingness to negate their Dasein, the givens of their presently determinate lives, by risking death in a face-to-face struggle. But, and Hegel has just made this very clear in his discussion of the Begriff of life, for particular, determinate lives, death, sooner or later, is inescapable -- the struggle in the face of death is metaphorical of the human condition.

36 All acts of self-consciousness are taken in the face of death -- that is the essence of self-consciousness, the human species, the species aware of itself as such, the members of which know that they negate and will be negated, that they will die, each as an individual. To be a self-conscious individuality is to exercise one's negating power in the face of the recognition that one will be negated, to live in freedom from the given Dasein, the ultimate negation of which one foresees, and to show one's capacity to rise above the given Dasein, to negate various

Can Marx really take over the concept of man as a species-being and uphold his materialism? Human awareness of individual mortality consists of forming an abstract concept of the human species; observing that all members of that species, like members of other species, die; and concluding that therefore I am mortal too. Dogs may observe dead dogs, what they presumably lack is the abstract definition of the species; hence they lack the syllogism demonstrating their individual mortality./

features of it self-consciously, prior to one's ultimate negation, and to do so for the sake of something, for the sake of Anerkennen, that is for the sake of the truth of one's self-certainty, realizing that by recognizing and being recognized the true self-certainty will live on in the common life of the species. Anerkennen centers on those self-certainties, the reciprocal recognizing of which individuals feel will over-come their personal mortality, and in the interplay of such self-certainties, there is a very high stake, namely each person's capacity to negate the ultimate negation, death itself.

For the concept of death in Hegel's work see Georges Cottier, "L'etre-pour-la-mort", une notion hégélienne?", Revue de métaphysique et de morale, Oct/Déc, 1980, pp. 452-467./

37 It is here that a will to truth enters the process. The person who simply withdraws from the process of reciprocal recognizing becomes mere animal, living without reference to his individual mortality, awareness of which is the identifying characteristic of man, the self-conscious species. The person who simply enters the process of reciprocal recognizing, with the adamant unwillingness to change his self-certainty under any circumstances, only enters it in appearance, for he does so in a manner in which he renounces his power of self-conscious negating, which is his power to determine and redetermine his self-certainty, precisely the power to be recognized in the process of reciprocal recognizing. The person who enters the process of reciprocal recognizing, aware both of his self-certainty and his more fundamental power of self-conscious negating which gives rise to that and all other self-certainties, who enters the process ready to deploy that negating

power equally on his own given self-certainties as well as those of others, can help make the process one that raises the self-certainties to truth, thus contributing, in Hegel's terms, to creating a universal self-consciousness, through participation in which the individual overcomes, negates, his own mortality.

38

In concrete, individual, lived-experience, the great danger to the process of reciprocal recognizing lies in excessive attachment to the given Dasein, which might be defined as the sum of the self-certainties that a person has in force at a given moment. It is human, all-too-human, to become satisfied with these, to seek to protect them from one's own self-conscious negating, not allowing oneself to doubt and question them, and protecting them from the similar power in those around one. For Hegel, such a sacrifice of the potentially immortal for the protection of the definitively mortal and passing existence makes no sense -- full entry of self-consciousness into the process of reciprocal recognizing is the way to the development of human spirit, the way to individual fulfilment and to collective achievement, the path of education, Bildung, in its most significant sense. And again, we should close by coming back to our basic queries, what effects on the pedagogical capacities of our educational institutions arise from making them agents for initiating people into a specific Dasein? Can educators accept the role of certifying people as competent for specific roles -- lawyer, teacher, baker, or mechanic -- and at the same time maintain full engagement in the profound uncertainties of the process of reciprocal recognizing? What are the effects on the historical creativity of peoples who begin to isolate themselves from daily awareness of each person's impending death? Does, as Hegel's views would suggest it might, this isolation from death trivialize self-consciousness and the process of reciprocal recognizing? Can educators -- both teachers and students -- understand their work as their wager of immortality, the wager, not of a god-granted, but of a man-created immortality?

/Check Becker's Denial of Death for possible light on these questions./

III. A Summation in Midstream: On Risking, Recognizing, and the Pedagogy of the Phenomenology

39

One line of reflection following out the above questions may be stimulated by reflecting on risk and the pedagogy of Hegel's Phenomenology. We began observing that Hegel thought of the Phenomenology as a work on education in two senses, first as an analysis of the education of humanity as it had occurred up to the time of Hegel's writing, and second as a pedagogic aid to the reader, helping him to bring himself to the "height of the times," the standpoint of "science." In the above notes I have concentrated on a small part of what Hegel had to say about the first educational matter, the process of Anerkennen in the educational experience of humanity. We might, however, here briefly note certain peculiarities of the Phenomenology as a pedagogic work in the light of what Hegel had to say about reciprocal recognizing. The

book is notoriously difficult, whether unnecessarily so or not we can here leave moot. Its difficulty is not precisely the quality to note; rather what is important is the strangely compelling way in which the Phenomenology puts its own outcome into question, doubt, uncertainty. By this I do not mean that its conclusion is tentative; not at all -- I mean something more difficult to specify, something that, like the Phenomenology itself, may be something that can be stated only through a statement that itself puts itself into question, doubt, uncertainty. But let us try.

40 To begin, note that the writing of the Phenomenology itself was highly problematic. It is a book of awesome ambition, difficult to write under the best of circumstances. At the time Hegel wrote it, his career was on the brink of extinction, about to perish for want of publication; his personal life, emotional and financial was a mess -- he was debt ridden and the new father of an illegitimate son by a socially unacceptable mistress. To boot, his best friend, Hölderlin, had just gone mad, his other best friend, Schelling, was about to be defined as the chief foil for Hegel's thought. Point, counterpoint, the public world around him was in equal disarray, experiencing the world-historical process of being aufgehoben by Napoleon's armies, which won the decisive battle in the outskirts of Jena just as Hegel finished the Phenomenology -- Hegel was terrified the work would be confiscated on its way from Jena to the publishers. And finally, Hegel wrote the Phenomenology, in the midst of all this chaos, in the face of a pressing and absolute publishers deadline, and he wrote the work apparently without much of an outline, giving himself up instead to the logos of his basic thought, letting it carry him through the composition of the text, which, as the deadline neared, got longer and longer. All this is to observe that in the writing of the Phenomenology, however determined Hegel was, and he was surely extraordinarily determined, it could only be uncertain, from beginning to end, whether there would be an outcome to the effort, and if so, what that would be. The Hegel of the Phenomenology is always at the border of possible prose, of possible thought, and a real effort to read it leaves one astonished that it should ever have been possible to write the book.

41 In the same way that the book itself, as an outcome of an effort to think and write, seems utterly uncertain and unpredictable, so too does the effort to read it. This uncertainty to the outcome of the reading, once engaged, becomes the source of its fascination and power. The book entails an unusual process of reading, one in which the normal deployment of critical faculties -- do I agree with this point and the next and that which follows -- must be held in abeyance and all one's energies are instead mobilized in the desperate effort to comprehend the text. One cannot really begin to evaluate the argument, to decide whether and for what reasons to agree or disagree, until the whole of it has been fully mastered. Thus the reader must proceed through an extraordinary effort with no assurance whether in the end that effort will bear fruit or nought. But the process develops its own fascination, its own exhilaration, and its own fruit, as the reader, section by section, seeks to construe the text, to pursue potential significations, to understand what is being said, and as a result of the effort, one finds

one's understanding of diverse matters expanding and deepening, not necessarily under Hegel's direct tutelage, but via his stimulation, his heuristic power. Undoubtedly Hegel might have stated the position he asserts in the Phenomenology more clearly; but whether he could more effectively have drawn readers into the effort of reciprocally recognizing important aspects of human life should not be judged too quickly.

42
At any rate, the form of the Phenomenology seems marvelously consistent with what Hegel tried to say about Anerkennen in it; from all perspectives the outcome is profoundly uncertain. Hegel's later work has a heavy, pre-determined quality characteristic of the exposition of an established system. The Phenomenology, in contrast, seems to display Hegel's self-conscious negating in the process of determining a course of thought -- one quickly grasps abstractly where it is going to lead, but one is utterly uncertain whether concretely it does in fact lead there and what the book is about is not the destination of the thought, but the process of thinking leading to the destination. Anerkennen, reciprocal recognizing, involves recognizing, not merely the particular self-certainties that various persons have attained, but more fundamentally, the power of self-conscious negating through which those persons attain their self-certainties. It is this power, in Hegel, his power of negation, his employment of it to give unfolding thought, further and further, determinate form, that he displays in the Phenomenology, and he displays it in such a way that the reader must employ the same power that he or she possesses to make whatever sense possible of the text, to understand the work. To end once again with the basic question, can educational activities designed with reference to a pre-determined determinate outcome effectively educate the power of self-determining negation of those engaging in the educational activities?