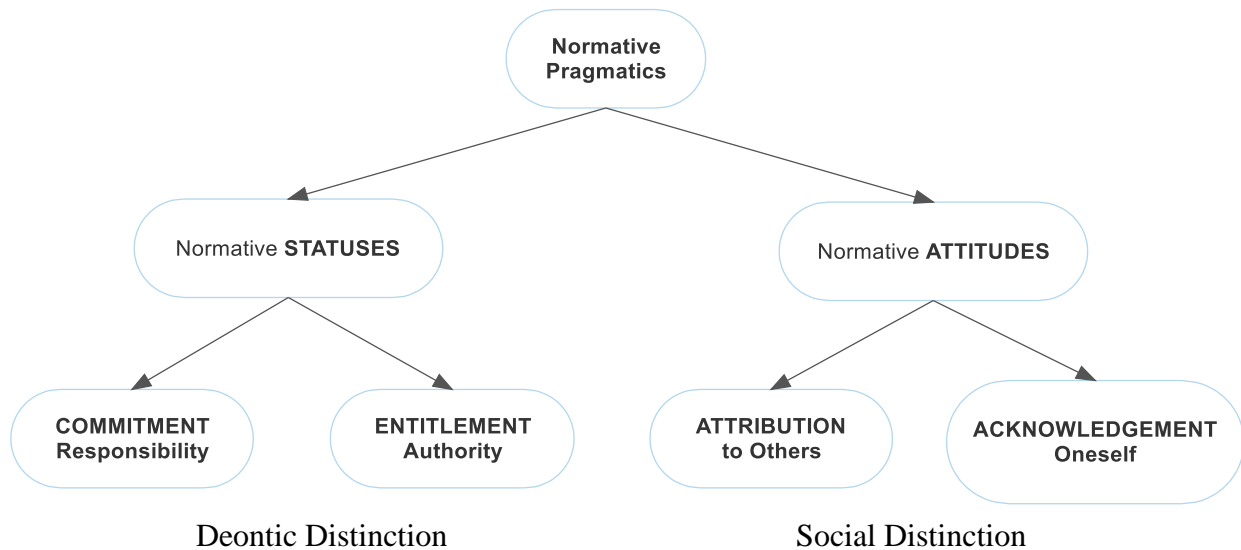


## The Metaphysics of Normativity and the Social Dimension of Discursive Practice

### Outline:

- Recap.
- I. The Social Metaphysics of Normativity: Attitudes and Statuses
- II. Propositional Attitude Ascriptions:  
Making Normative Attitudes Explicit in an Extension of the Base Vocabulary
- III. *De Re* Ascriptions and Representational Uptake

### I. The Social Metaphysics of Normativity: Attitudes and Statuses



### JTB. Two Approaches:

1. Knowledge is justified true belief that  $p$
2. What one is *doing* in *taking* someone  $S$  to know that  $p$  is:
  - i) *Attributing* to  $S$  doxastic *commitment* to  $p$ , (B)
  - ii) *Attributing* to  $S$  *entitlement* to that commitment to  $p$ , (J)
  - iii) *Acknowledging* oneself *commitment* to that claimable  $p$ , (T).

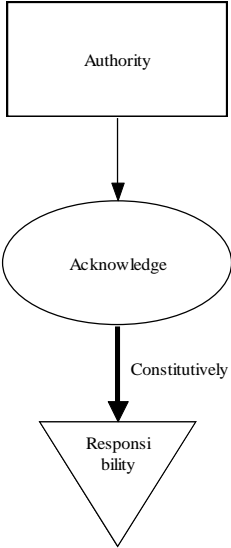
### **Q: What are the relations between normative *attitudes* and normative *statuses*?**

Hegel distinguishes between two approaches to their conceptual-explanatory priority:

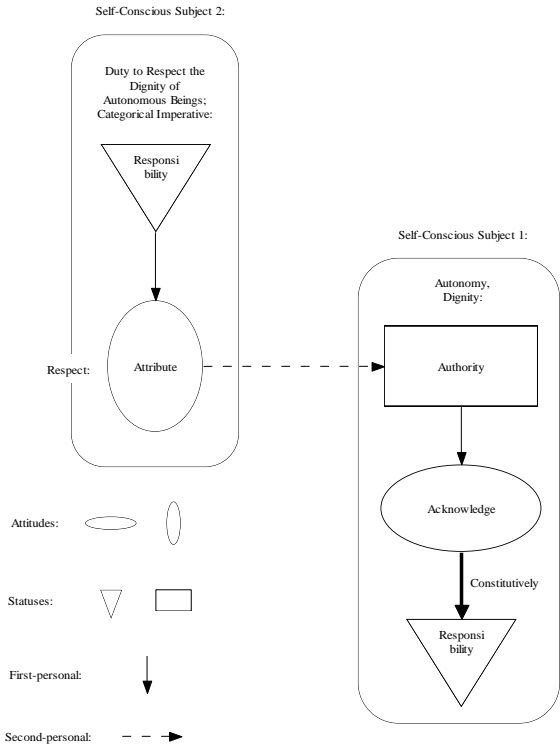
**Traditional:** the status-dependence of normative attitudes. (Status-first approach.)

**Modern:** the attitude-dependence of normative statuses. (Attitude-first approach.)

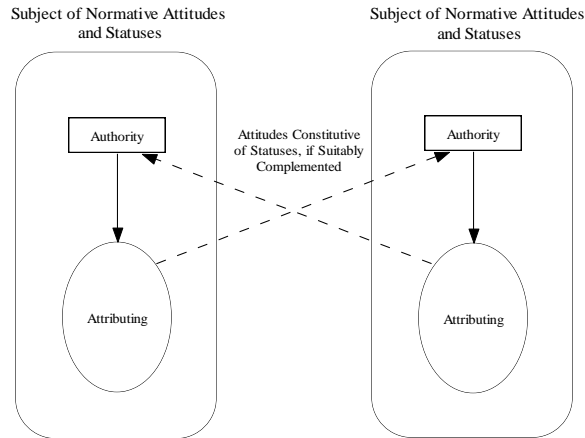
# Autonomy: The Basic Kantian Normative Status



## The Social Dimension of the Kantian Autonomy Model



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



“They *recognize* themselves as *mutually recognizing* one another.” [Hegel: *PhG* 184].

**II. Propositional Attitude Ascriptions:**  
**Making Normative Attitudes Explicit in an Extension of the Base Vocabulary**

The *de dicto* / *de re* distinction for tense:

1. The President of the United States will be a woman by January 21, 2025.
2. Joe Biden is the President of the United States.

so

3. Joe Biden will be a woman by January 21, 2025.

The inference reads (1) as about a particular person (*res*, or thing), namely Joe Biden, and tracks that person/thing (*res*) through time.

The sense in which (1) is true, though, is *de dicto*: the *dictum* (saying, proposition)

“The President of the United States is a woman,” *will be true* on January 21, 2025.

It is that *dictum* that is followed through time, rather than the *res*.

An *ascription* of propositional attitude expresses the practical attitude of *attributing* a doxastic commitment, by making an assertion: “S believes (is doxastically committed to accept) *p*.”

In ascribing, one is accordingly doing *two* things:

*attributing* one doxastic commitment and *acknowledging* another.

So there can be an issue about what part of the utterance is doing what job: expressing the commitment *acknowledged* or the commitment *attributed*.

4. Henry Adams believed the inventor of the lightning rod did not invent the lightning rod.
5. \* Henry Adams believed **that** the inventor of the lightning rod did not invent the lightning rod. (*De dicto*)

6. Henry Adams believed **of** the inventor of the lightning rod **that** he did not invent the lightning rod. (*De re*)
7. Henry Adams believed **that** the inventor of bifocals did not invent the lightning rod.

In specifying the content of the claim that is attributed by an ascription, a question can arise as to who the ascriber takes to be responsible for this being a way of *saying* (that is, making explicit) what is believed, the content of the commitment. Consider the sly prosecutor, who characterizes his opponent's claim by saying:

8. The defense attorney believes a pathological liar is a trustworthy witness.

We can imagine that the defense attorney hotly contests this characterization:

9. Not so; what I believe is that the man who just testified is a trustworthy witness.

To which the prosecutor might reply:

10. Exactly, and I have presented evidence that ought to convince anyone that the man who just testified is a pathological liar.

What the prosecutor *ought* to say (matters of courtroom strategy aside) is:

11. The defense attorney claims **of** a pathological liar that he is a trustworthy witness.

Suppose that according to *A*'s scorekeeping on commitments, *S* acknowledges commitment to the claim  $\Phi(t)$ . Then *A* can make this attribution of commitment explicit in the form of a claim:

12. *A*: *S* claims **that**  $\Phi(t)$ .

If in addition *A* **acknowledges** commitment to the identity

13. *A*:  $t=t'$ ,

then whether or not *A* takes it that *S* would acknowledge that commitment, *A* can *also* characterize the content of the commitment ascribed to *S* by saying, *de re*

14. *A*: *S* claims **of**  $t'$  that  $\Phi(it)$ .

The converse of *de re* ascriptions is <sup>s</sup> **scare quotes**<sup>s</sup>.

Suppose a politician says:

15. *S*: The patriotic freedom fighters liberated the village.

disagreeing with the characterization, but wanting to stipulate that she is referring to the same folks, his opponent might respond, *attributing* the substitutional commitment:

16. *A*: Those <sup>s</sup> patriotic freedom fighters<sup>s</sup> massacred the entire population.

### **III. De Re Ascriptions and Representational Uptake**

Claim: The principal locus and home language-game in ordinary language of the locutions by which we distinguish what we are talking or thinking *about*, rather than what we are saying or thinking, is the 'of' or 'about' that marks off *de re* portions of propositional-attitude ascriptions. This vocabulary expresses the distinction of **social perspective** between commitments *attributed* and those *acknowledged*, and *thereby* the **representational** dimension of discursive content.